

**Saint Aquinas Thomas**  
**The Summa Theologica: Complete**  
**Edition**

**FIRST PART (FP: QQ 1-119)**

**ENCYCLICAL OF POPE LEO XIII**

**ON THE RESTORATION OF CHRISTIAN**  
**PHILOSOPHY**

*To the Patriarchs,  
Primates, Archbishops,  
and Bishops of the  
Catholic World in Grace  
and Communion with the  
Apostolic See.*

The only-begotten Son of the Eternal Father, who came on earth to bring salvation and the light of divine wisdom to men, conferred a great and wonderful blessing on the world when, about to ascend again into heaven, He commanded the Apostles to go and teach all nations,<sup>1</sup> and left the Church which He had founded to be the common and supreme teacher of the peoples. For

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<sup>1</sup> Matt.28:19.

men whom the truth had set free were to be preserved by the truth; nor would the fruits of heavenly doctrines by which salvation comes to men have long remained had not the Lord Christ appointed an unfailing teaching authority to train the minds to faith. And the Church built upon the promises of its own divine Author, whose charity it imitated, so faithfully followed out His commands that its constant aim and chief wish was this: to teach religion and contend forever against errors. To this end assuredly have tended the incessant labors of individual bishops; to this end also the published laws and decrees of councils, and especially the constant watchfulness of the Roman Pontiffs, to whom, as successors of the blessed Peter in the primacy of the Apostles, belongs the right and office of teaching and confirming their brethren in the faith. Since, then, according to the warning of the apostle, the minds of Christ's faithful are apt to be deceived and the integrity of the faith to be corrupted among men by philosophy and vain deceit,<sup>2</sup> the supreme pastors of the Church have always thought it their duty to advance, by every means in their power, science truly so called, and at the same time to provide with special care that all studies should accord with the Catholic faith, especially philosophy, on which a right interpretation of the other sciences in great part depends. Indeed, venerable

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<sup>2</sup> Col. 2:8.

brethren, on this very subject among others, We briefly admonished you in Our first encyclical letter; but now, both by reason of the gravity of the subject and the condition of the time, we are again compelled to speak to you on the mode of taking up the study of philosophy which shall respond most fitly to the excellence of faith, and at the same time be consonant with the dignity of human science.

2. Whoso turns his attention to the bitter strifes of these days and seeks a reason for the troubles that vex public and private life must come to the conclusion that a fruitful cause of the evils which now afflict, as well as those which threaten, us lies in this: that false conclusions concerning divine and human things, which originated in the schools of philosophy, have now crept into all the orders of the State, and have been accepted by the common consent of the masses. For, since it is in the very nature of man to follow the guide of reason in his actions, if his intellect sins at all his will soon follows; and thus it happens that false opinions, whose seat is in the understanding, influence human actions and pervert them. Whereas, on the other hand, if men be of sound mind and take their stand on true and solid principles, there will result a vast amount of benefits for the public and private good. We do not, indeed, attribute such force and authority to philosophy as to esteem it equal to the task of combating and rooting out all errors; for, when the Christian religion

was first constituted, it came upon earth to restore it to its primeval dignity by the admirable light of faith, diffused “not by persuasive words of human wisdom, but in the manifestation of spirit and of power,”<sup>3</sup> so also at the present time we look above all things to the powerful help of Almighty God to bring back to a right understanding the minds of man and dispel the darkness of error.<sup>4</sup> But the natural helps with which the grace of the divine wisdom, strongly and sweetly disposing all things, has supplied the human race are neither to be despised nor neglected, chief among which is evidently the right use of philosophy. For, not in vain did God set the light of reason in the human mind; and so far is the super-added light of faith from extinguishing or lessening the power of the intelligence that it completes it rather, and by adding to its strength renders it capable of greater things.

3. Therefore, Divine Providence itself requires that, in calling back the people to the paths of faith and salvation, advantage should be taken of human science also—an approved and wise practice which history testifies was observed by the most illustrious Fathers of the Church. They, indeed, were wont neither to belittle nor undervalue the part that reason had to play, as is

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<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. 2:4.

<sup>4</sup> See *Inscrutabili Dei consilio*, 78:113.

summed up by the great Augustine when he attributes to this science “that by which the most wholesome faith is begotten.. is nourished, defended, and made strong.”<sup>5</sup>

4. In the first place, philosophy, if rightly made use of by the wise, in a certain way tends to smooth and fortify the road to true faith, and to prepare the souls of its disciples for the fit reception of revelation; for which reason it is well called by ancient writers sometimes a steppingstone to the Christian faith,<sup>6</sup> sometimes the prelude and help of Christianity,<sup>7</sup> sometimes the Gospel teacher.<sup>8</sup> And, assuredly, the God of all goodness, in all that pertains to divine things, has not only manifested by the light of faith those truths which human intelligence could not attain of itself, but others, also, not altogether unattainable by reason, that by the help of divine authority they may be made known to all at once and without any admixture of error. Hence it is that certain truths which were either divinely proposed for belief, or were bound by the closest chains to the doctrine of faith, were discovered by pagan sages with

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<sup>5</sup> *De Trinitate*, 14, 1, 3 (PL 42, 1037); quoted by Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1, 1, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, 1, 16 (PG 8, 795); 7, 3 (PG 9, 426).

<sup>7</sup> Origen, *Epistola ad Gregorium* (PG 11, 87–91).

<sup>8</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, 1,5 (PG 8, 718–719).

nothing but their natural reason to guide them, were demonstrated and proved by becoming arguments. For, as the Apostle says, the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made: His eternal power also and divinity;<sup>9</sup> and the Gentiles who have not the Law show, nevertheless, the work of the Law written in their hearts.<sup>10</sup> But it is most fitting to turn these truths, which have been discovered by the pagan sages even, to the use and purposes of revealed doctrine, in order to show that both human wisdom and the very testimony of our adversaries serve to support the Christian faith—a method which is not of recent introduction, but of established use, and has often been adopted by the holy Fathers of the Church. What is more, those venerable men, the witnesses and guardians of religious traditions, recognize a certain form and figure of this in the action of the Hebrews, who, when about to depart out of Egypt, were commanded to take with them the gold and silver vessels and precious robes of the Egyptians, that by a change of use the things might be dedicated to the service of the true God which had formerly been the instruments of ignoble and

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<sup>9</sup> Rom. 1:20.

<sup>10</sup> Rom.2:14–15.

superstitious rites. Gregory of NeoCaesarea<sup>11</sup> praises Origen expressly because, with singular dexterity, as one snatches weapons from the enemy, he turned to the defense of Christian wisdom and to the destruction of superstition many arguments drawn from the writings of the pagans. And both Gregory of Nazianzen<sup>12</sup> and Gregory of Nyssa<sup>13</sup> praise and commend a like mode of disputation in Basil the Great; while Jerome<sup>14</sup> especially commends it in Quadratus, a disciple of the Apostles, in Aristides, Justin, Irenaeus, and very many others. Augustine says: “Do we not see Cyprian, that mildest of doctors and most blessed of martyrs, going out of Egypt laden with gold and silver and vestments? And Lactantius, also and Victorinus, Optatus and Hilary? And, not to speak of the living, how many Greeks have done likewise?”<sup>15</sup> But if natural reason

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11 Gregory of Neo-Caesarea (also called Gregory Thaumaturgus that is «the miracle worker»), *In Origenem oratio panegyrica*, 6 (PG 10, 1093A).

12 Carm., 1, Iamb. 3 (PG 37, 1045A-1047A).

13 *Vita Moysis* (PG 44, 359).

14 *Epistola ad Magnum*, 4 (PL 22, 667). Quadratus, Justin Irenaeus, are counted among the early Christian apologists, who devoted their works to the defence of Christian truth against the pagans.

15 *De doctrina christiana*, 1, 2, 40 (PL 34, 63).

first sowed this rich field of doctrine before it was rendered fruitful by the power of Christ, it must assuredly become more prolific after the grace of the Saviour has renewed and added to the native faculties of the human mind. And who does not see that a plain and easy road is opened up to faith by such a method of philosophic study?

5. But the advantage to be derived from such a school of philosophy is not to be confined within these limits. The foolishness of those men who “by these good things that are seen could not understand Him, that is, neither by attending to the works could have acknowledged who was the workman,”<sup>16</sup> is gravely reprovèd in the words of Divine Wisdom. In the first place, then, this great and noble fruit is gathered from human reason, that it demonstrates that God is; for the greatness of the beauty and of the creature the Creator of them may be seen so as to be known thereby.<sup>17</sup> Again, it shows God to excel in the height of all perfections, especially in infinite wisdom before which nothing lies hidden, and in absolute justice which no depraved affection could possibly shake; and that God, therefore, is not only true but truth itself, which can neither deceive nor be deceived. Whence it clearly

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<sup>16</sup> Wisd. 13:1.

<sup>17</sup> Wisd. 13:5.



follows that human reason finds the fullest faith and authority united in the word of God. In like manner, reason declares that the doctrine of the Gospel has even from its very beginning been made manifest by certain wonderful signs, the established proofs, as it were, of unshaken truth; and that all, therefore, who set faith in the Gospel do not believe rashly as though following cunningly devised fables,<sup>18</sup> but, by a most reasonable consent, subject their intelligence and judgment to an authority which is divine. And of no less importance is it that reason most clearly sets forth that the Church instituted by Christ (as laid down in the Vatican Council), on account of its wonderful spread, its marvellous sanctity, and its inexhaustible fecundity in all places, as well as of its Catholic unity and unshaken stability, is in itself a great and perpetual motive of belief and an irrefragable testimony of its own divine mission.<sup>19</sup>

6. Its solid foundations having been thus laid, a perpetual and varied service is further required of philosophy, in order that sacred theology may receive and assume the nature, form, and genius of a true science. For in this, the most noble of studies, it is of the greatest necessity to bind together, as it were, in one

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<sup>18</sup> 2 Peter 1:16.

<sup>19</sup> Const. Dogm, de Fid. Cath., c.3.

body the many and various parts of the heavenly doctrines, that, each being allotted to its own proper place and derived from its own proper principles, the whole may join together in a complete union; in order, in fine, that all and each part may be strengthened by its own and the others' invincible arguments. Nor is that more accurate or fuller knowledge of the things that are believed, and somewhat more lucid understanding, as far as it can go, of the very mysteries of faith which Augustine and the other fathers commended and strove to reach, and which the Vatican Council itself<sup>20</sup> declared to be most fruitful, to be passed over in silence or belittled. Those will certainly more fully and more easily attain that knowledge and understanding who to integrity of life and love of faith join a mind rounded and finished by philosophic studies, as the same Vatican Council teaches that the knowledge of such sacred dogmas ought to be sought as well from analogy of the things that are naturally known as from the connection of those mysteries one with another and with the final end of man.<sup>21</sup>

7. Lastly, the duty of religiously defending the truths divinely delivered, and of resisting those who dare oppose them, pertains to philosophic pursuits.

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<sup>20</sup> Const. cit., c.4.

<sup>21</sup> Loc. cit.

Wherefore, it is the glory of philosophy to be esteemed as the bulwark of faith and the strong defense of religion. As Clement of Alexandria testifies, the doctrine of the Saviour is indeed perfect in itself and wanteth naught, since it is the power and wisdom of God. And the assistance of the Greek philosophy maketh not the truth more powerful; but, inasmuch as it weakens the contrary arguments of the sophists and repels the veiled attacks against the truth, it has been fitly called the hedge and fence of the vine.<sup>22</sup> For, as the enemies of the Catholic name, when about to attack religion, are in the habit of borrowing their weapons from the arguments of philosophers, so the defenders of sacred science draw many arguments from the store of philosophy which may serve to uphold revealed dogmas. Nor is the triumph of the Christian faith a small one in using human reason to repel powerfully and speedily the attacks of its adversaries by the hostile arms which human reason itself supplied. This species of religious strife St. Jerome, writing to Magnus, notices as having been adopted by the Apostle of the Gentiles himself; Paul, the leader of the Christian army and the invincible orator, battling for the cause of Christ, skillfully turns even a chance inscription into an argument for the faith; for he had learned from the true David to wrest the sword from the hands of the enemy

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<sup>22</sup> *Stromata*, 1, 20 (PG 8, 818).

and to cut off the head of the boastful Goliath with his own weapon.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the Church herself not only urges, but even commands, Christian teachers to seek help from philosophy. For, the fifth Lateran Council, after it had decided that “every assertion contrary to the truth of revealed faith is altogether false, for the reason that it contradicts, however slightly, the truth,”<sup>24</sup> advises teachers of philosophy to pay close attention to the exposition of fallacious arguments; since, as Augustine testifies, “if reason is turned against the authority of sacred Scripture, no matter how specious it may seem, it errs in the likeness of truth; for true it cannot be.”<sup>25</sup>

8. But in order that philosophy may be bound equal to the gathering of those precious fruits which we have indicated, it behooves it above all things never to turn aside from that path which the Fathers have entered upon from a venerable antiquity, and which the Vatican Council solemnly and authoritatively approved. As it is evident that very many truths of the supernatural order which are far beyond the reach of the keenest intellect must be accepted, human reason, conscious of its own infirmity, dare not affect to itself

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<sup>23</sup> *Epistola ad Magnum*, 2 (PL 22, 666).

<sup>24</sup> *Bulla Apostolici regiminis*.

<sup>25</sup> *Epistola 147, ad Marcellinum*, 7 (PL 33, 589).

too great powers, nor deny those truths, nor measure them by its own standard, nor interpret them at will; but receive them, rather, with a full and humble faith, and esteem it the highest honor to be allowed to wait upon heavenly doctrines like a handmaid and attendant, and by God's goodness attain to them in any way whatsoever. But in the case of such doctrines as the human intelligence may perceive, it is equally just that philosophy should make use of its own method, principles, and arguments-not, indeed, in such fashion as to seem rashly to withdraw from the divine authority. But, since it is established that those things which become known by revelation have the force of certain truth, and that those things which war against faith war equally against right reason, the Catholic philosopher will know that he violates at once faith and the laws of reason if he accepts any conclusion which he understands to be opposed to revealed doctrine.

9. We know that there are some who, in their overestimate of the human faculties, maintain that as soon as man's intellect becomes subject to divine authority it falls from its native dignity, and hampered by the yoke of this species of slavery, is much retarded and hindered in its progress toward the supreme truth and excellence. Such an idea is most false and deceptive, and its sole tendency is to induce foolish and ungrateful men wilfully to repudiate the most sublime truths, and reject the divine gift of faith, from which the

fountains of all good things flow out upon civil society. For the human mind, being confined within certain limits, and those narrow enough, is exposed to many errors and is ignorant of many things; whereas the Christian faith, reposing on the authority of God, is the unfailing mistress of truth, whom whoso followeth he will be neither enmeshed in the snares of error nor tossed hither and thither on the waves of fluctuating opinion. Those, therefore, who to the study of philosophy unite obedience to the Christian faith, are philosophizing in the best possible way; for the splendor of the divine truths, received into the mind, helps the understanding, and not only detracts in nowise from its dignity, but adds greatly to its nobility, keenness, and stability. For surely that is a worthy and most useful exercise of reason when men give their minds to disproving those things which are repugnant to faith and proving the things which conform to faith. In the first case they cut the ground from under the feet of error and expose the viciousness of the arguments on which error rests; while in the second case they make themselves masters of weighty reasons for the sound demonstration of truth and the satisfactory instruction of any reasonable person. Whoever denies that such study and practice tend to add to the resources and expand the faculties of the mind must necessarily and absurdly hold that the mind gains nothing from discriminating between the true and the false. Justly,

therefore, does the Vatican Council commemorate in these words the great benefits which faith has conferred upon reason: Faith *frees* and saves reason *from error*, and endows it with *manifold* knowledge.<sup>26</sup> A wise man, therefore, would not accuse faith and look upon it as opposed to reason and natural truths, but would rather offer heartfelt thanks to God, and sincerely rejoice that, in the density of ignorance and in the flood-tide of error, holy faith, like a friendly star, shines down upon his path and points out to him the fair gate of truth beyond all danger of wandering.

10. If, venerable brethren, you open the history of philosophy, you will find all We have just said proved by experience. The philosophers of old who lacked the gift of faith, yet were esteemed so wise, fell into many appalling errors. You know how often among some truths they taught false and incongruous things; what vague and doubtful opinions they held concerning the nature of the Divinity, the first origin of things, the government of the world, the divine knowledge of the future, the cause and principle of evil, the ultimate end of man, the eternal beatitude, concerning virtue and vice, and other matters, a true and certain knowledge of which is most necessary to the human race; while, on the other hand, the early Fathers and Doctors of the Church, who well understood that, according to the

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<sup>26</sup> Const. Dogm. de Fid. Cath., c.4.

divine plan, the restorer of human science is Christ, who is the power and the wisdom of God,<sup>27</sup> and in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,<sup>28</sup> took up and investigated the books of the ancient philosophers, and compared their teachings with the doctrines of revelation, and, carefully sifting them, they cherished what was true and wise in them and amended or rejected all else. For, as the all-seeing God against the cruelty of tyrants raised up mighty martyrs to the defense of the Church, men prodigal of their great lives, in like manner to false philosophers and heretics He opposed men of great wisdom, to defend, even by the aid of human reason, the treasure of revealed truths. Thus, from the very first ages of the Church, the Catholic doctrine has encountered a multitude of most bitter adversaries, who, deriding the Christian dogmas and institutions, maintained that there were many gods, that the material world never had a beginning or cause, and that the course of events was one of blind and fatal necessity, not regulated by the will of Divine Providence.

11. But the learned men whom We call apologists speedily encountered these teachers of foolish doctrine and, under the guidance of faith, found arguments in

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<sup>27</sup> 1 Cor. 1:24.

<sup>28</sup> Col. 2:3.



human wisdom also to prove that one God, who stands pre-eminent in every kind of perfection, is to be worshiped; that all things were created from nothing by His omnipotent power; that by His wisdom they flourish and serve each their own special purposes. Among these St. Justin Martyr claims the chief place.

After having tried the most celebrated academies of the Greeks, he saw clearly, as he himself confesses, that he could only draw truths in their fullness from the doctrine of revelation. These he embraced with all the ardor of his soul, purged of calumny, courageously and fully defended before the Roman emperors, and reconciled with them not a few of the sayings of the Greek philosophers.

12. Quadratus, also, and Aristides, Hermias, and Athenagoras stood nobly forth in that time. Nor did Irenaeus, the invincible martyr and Bishop of Lyons, win less glory in the same cause when, forcibly refuting the perverse opinions of the Orientals, the work of the Gnostics, scattered broadcast over the territories of the Roman Empire, he explained (according to Jerome) the origin of each heresy and in what philosophic source it took its rise.<sup>29</sup> But who knows not the disputations of Clement of Alexandria, which the same Jerome thus honorably commemorates: "What is there in them that is not learned, and what that is not of the very heart of

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<sup>29</sup> *Epistola ad Magnum*, 4 (PL 22, 667).

philosophy?”<sup>30</sup> He himself, indeed, with marvellous versatility treated of many things of the greatest utility for preparing a history of philosophy, for the exercise of the dialectic art, and for showing the agreement between reason and faith. After him came Origen, who graced the chair of the school of Alexandria, and was most learned in the teachings of the Greeks and Orientals. He published many volumes, involving great labor, which were wonderfully adapted to explain the divine writings and illustrate the sacred dogmas; which, though, as they now stand, not altogether free from error, contain nevertheless a wealth of knowledge tending to the growth and advance of natural truths. Tertullian opposes heretics with the authority of the sacred writings; with the philosophers he changes his fence and disputes philosophically; but so learnedly and accurately did he confute them that he made bold to say: “Neither in science nor in schooling are we equals, as you imagine.”<sup>31</sup> Arnobius, also, in his works against the pagans, and Lactantius in the divine Institutions especially, with equal eloquence and strength strenuously strive to move men to accept the dogmas and precepts of Catholic wisdom, not by philosophic juggling, after the fashion of the

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<sup>30</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>31</sup> Tertullian, *Apologet.*, 46 (PL 1, 573).

Academicians, but vanquishing them partly by their own arms, and partly by arguments drawn from the mutual contentions of the philosophers.<sup>32</sup> But the writings on the human soul, the divine attributes, and other questions of mighty moment which the great Athanasius and Chrysostom, the prince of orators, have left behind them are, by common consent, so supremely excellent that it seems scarcely anything could be added to their subtlety and fulness. And, not to cover too wide a range, we add to the number of the great men of whom mention has been made the names of Basil the Great and of the two Gregories, who, on going forth from Athens, that home of all learning, thoroughly equipped with all the harness of philosophy, turned the wealth of knowledge which each had gathered up in a course of zealous study to the work of refuting heretics and preparing Christians.

13. But Augustine would seem to have wrested the palm from all. Of a most powerful genius and thoroughly saturated with sacred and profane learning, with the loftiest faith and with equal knowledge, he combated most vigorously all the errors of his age. What topic of philosophy did he not investigate? What region of it did he not diligently explore, either in expounding the loftiest mysteries of the faith to the faithful, or defending them against the full onslaught of

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<sup>32</sup> Lactantius, *Div. Inst.*, 7, 7 (PL 6, 759).

adversaries, or again when, in demolishing the fables of the Academicians or the Manichaeans, he laid the safe foundations and sure structure of human science, or followed up the reason, origin, and causes of the evils that afflict man? How subtly he reasoned on the angels, the soul, the human mind, the will and free choice, on religion and the life of the blessed, on time and eternity, and even on the very nature of changeable bodies. Afterwards, in the East, John Damascene, treading in the footsteps of Basil and of Gregory of Nazianzen, and in the West, Boethius and Anselm following the doctrines of Augustine, added largely to the patrimony of philosophy.

14. Later on, the doctors of the middle ages, who are called Scholastics, addressed themselves to a great work—that of diligently collecting, and sifting, and storing up, as it were, in one place, for the use and convenience of posterity the rich and fertile harvests of Christian learning scattered abroad in the voluminous works of the holy Fathers. And with regard, venerable brethren, to the origin, drift, and excellence of this scholastic learning, it may be well here to speak more fully in the words of one of the wisest of Our predecessors, Sixtus V: “By the divine favor of Him who alone gives the spirit of science wisdom, and understanding, and who thou ages, as there may be need, enriches His Church with new blessings and strengthens it with safeguards, there was founded by

Our fathers, men of eminent wisdom, the scholastic theology, which two glorious doctors in particular angelic St. Thomas and the seraphic St. Bonaventure, illustrious teachers of this faculty, with surpassing genius, by unwearied diligence, and at the cost of long labors and vigils, set in order and beautified, and when skilfully arranged and clearly explained in a variety of ways, handed down to posterity.

15. “And, indeed, the knowledge and use of so salutary a science, which flows from the fertilizing founts of the sacred writings, the sovereign Pontiffs, the holy Fathers and the councils, must always be of the greatest assistance to the Church, whether with the view of really and soundly understanding and interpreting the Scriptures, or more safely and to better purpose reading and explaining the Fathers, or for exposing and refuting the various errors and heresies; and in these late days, when those dangerous times described by the Apostle are already upon us, when the blasphemers, the proud, and the seducers go from bad to worse, erring themselves and causing others to err, there is surely a very great need of confirming the dogmas of Catholic faith and confuting heresies.”

16. Although these words seem to bear reference solely to Scholastic theology, nevertheless they may plainly be accepted as equally true of philosophy and its praises. For, the noble endowments which make the Scholastic theology so formidable to the enemies of

truth-to wit, as the same Pontiff adds, “that ready and close coherence of cause and effect, that order and array as of a disciplined army in battle, those clear definitions and distinctions, that strength of argument and those keen discussions, by which light is distinguished from darkness, the true from the false, expose and strip naked, as it were, the falsehoods of heretics wrapped around by a cloud of subterfuges and fallacies”<sup>33</sup> those noble and admirable endowments, We say, are only to be found in a right use of that philosophy which the Scholastic teachers have been accustomed carefully and prudently to make use of even in theological disputations. Moreover, since it is the proper and special office of the Scholastic theologians to bind together by the fastest chain human and divine science, surely the theology in which they excelled would not have gained such honor and commendation among men if they had made use of a lame and imperfect or vain philosophy.

17. Among the Scholastic Doctors, the chief and master of all towers Thomas Aquinas, who, as Cajetan observes, because “he most venerated the ancient doctors of the Church, in a certain way seems to have inherited the intellect of all.”<sup>34</sup> The doctrines of those

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<sup>33</sup> Bulla *Triumphantis*, an. 1588.

<sup>34</sup> Cajetan's commentary on Sum. theol., IIa-IIae 148, 9. Art. 4;

illustrious men, like the scattered members of a body, Thomas collected together and cemented, distributed in wonderful order, and so increased with important additions that he is rightly and deservedly esteemed the special bulwark and glory of the Catholic faith. With his spirit at once humble and swift, his memory ready and tenacious, his life spotless throughout, a lover of truth for its own sake, richly endowed with human and divine science, like the sun he heated the world with the warmth of his virtues and filled it with the splendor of his teaching. Philosophy has no part which he did not touch finely at once and thoroughly; on the laws of reasoning, on God and incorporeal substances, on man and other sensible things, on human actions and their principles, he reasoned in such a manner that in him there is wanting neither a full array of questions, nor an apt disposal of the various parts, nor the best method of proceeding, nor soundness of principles or strength of argument, nor clearness and elegance of style, nor a facility for explaining what is abstruse.

18. Moreover, the Angelic Doctor pushed his philosophic inquiry into the reasons and principles of things, which because they are most comprehensive and contain in their bosom, so to say, the seeds of almost infinite truths, were to be unfolded in good time by later masters and with a goodly yield. And as he also

used this philosophic method in the refutation of error, he won this title to distinction for himself: that, single-handed, he victoriously combated the errors of former times, and supplied invincible arms to put those to rout which might in after-times spring up. Again, clearly distinguishing, as is fitting, reason from faith, while happily associating the one with the other, he both preserved the rights and had regard for the dignity of each; so much so, indeed, that reason, borne on the wings of Thomas to its human height, can scarcely rise higher, while faith could scarcely expect more or stronger aids from reason than those which she has already obtained through Thomas.

19. For these reasons most learned men, in former ages especially, of the highest repute in theology and philosophy, after mastering with infinite pains the immortal works of Thomas, gave themselves up not so much to be instructed in his angelic wisdom as to be nourished upon it. It is known that nearly all the founders and lawgivers of the religious orders commanded their members to study and religiously adhere to the teachings of St. Thomas, fearful lest any of them should swerve even in the slightest degree from the footsteps of so great a man. To say nothing of the family of St. Dominic, which rightly claims this great teacher for its own glory, the statutes of the Benedictines, the Carmelites, the Augustinians, the Society of Jesus, and many others all testify that they



are bound by this law.

20. And, here, how pleasantly one's thoughts fly back to those celebrated schools and universities which flourished of old in Europe—to Paris, Salamanca, Alcal, to Douay, Toulouse, and Louvain, to Padua and Bologna, to Naples and Coimbra, and to many another! All know how the fame of these seats of learning grew with their years, and that their judgment, often asked in matters of grave moment, held great weight everywhere. And we know how in those great homes of human wisdom, as in his own kingdom, Thomas reigned supreme; and that the minds of all, of teachers as well as of taught, rested in wonderful harmony under the shield and authority of the Angelic Doctor.

Z 1. But, furthermore, Our predecessors in the Roman pontificate have celebrated the wisdom of Thomas Aquinas by exceptional tributes of praise and the most ample testimonials. Clement VI in the bull *In Ordine*; Nicholas V in his brief to the friars of the Order of Preachers, 1451; Benedict XIII in the bull *Pretiosus*, and others bear witness that the universal Church borrows lustre from his admirable teaching; while St. Pius V declares in the bull *Mirabilis* that heresies, confounded and convicted by the same teaching, were dissipated, and the whole world daily freed from fatal errors; others, such as Clement XII in the bull *Verbo Dei*, affirm that most fruitful blessings have spread abroad from his writings over the whole

Church, and that he is worthy of the honor which is bestowed on the greatest Doctors of the Church, on Gregory and Ambrose, Augustine and Jerome; while others have not hesitated to propose St. Thomas for the exemplar and master of the universities and great centers of learning whom they may follow with unflinching feet. On which point the words of Blessed Urban V to the University of Toulouse are worthy of recall: "It is our will, which We hereby enjoin upon you, that ye follow the teaching of Blessed Thomas as the true and Catholic doctrine and that ye labor with all your force to profit by the same."<sup>35</sup> Innocent XII, followed the example of Urban in the case of the University of Louvain, in the letter in the form of a brief addressed to that university on February 6, 1694, and Benedict XIV in the letter in the form of a brief addressed on August 26, 1752, to the Dionysian College in Granada; while to these judgments of great Pontiffs on Thomas Aquinas comes the crowning testimony of Innocent VI: "His teaching above that of others, the canonical writings alone excepted, enjoys such a precision of language, an order of matters, a truth of conclusions, that those who hold to it are never found swerving from the path of truth, and he who dare

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<sup>35</sup> Constitutio 5a, data die 3 Aug. 1368, ad Cancell. Univ. Tolos.

assail it will always be suspected of error.”<sup>36</sup>

22. The ecumenical councils, also, where blossoms the flower of all earthly wisdom, have always been careful to hold Thomas Aquinas in singular honor. In the Councils of Lyons, Vienna, Florence, and the Vatican one might almost say that Thomas took part and presided over the deliberations and decrees of the Fathers, contending against the errors of the Greeks, of heretics and rationalists, with invincible force and with the happiest results. But the chief and special glory of Thomas, one which he has shared with none of the Catholic Doctors, is that the Fathers of Trent made it part of the order of conclave to lay upon the altar, together with sacred Scripture and the decrees of the supreme Pontiffs, the Summa of Thomas Aquinas, whence to seek counsel, reason, and inspiration.

23. A last triumph was reserved for this incomparable man—namely, to compel the homage, praise, and admiration of even the very enemies of the Catholic name. For it has come to light that there were not lacking among the leaders of heretical sects some who openly declared that, if the teaching of Thomas Aquinas were only taken away, they could easily battle with all Catholic teachers, gain the victory, and abolish

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<sup>36</sup> Sermo de *S. Thoma*.

the Church.<sup>37</sup> A vain hope, indeed, but no vain testimony.

24. Therefore, venerable brethren, as often as We contemplate the good, the force, and the singular advantages to be derived from his philosophic discipline which Our Fathers so dearly loved. We think it hazardous that its special honor should not always and everywhere remain, especially when it is established that daily experience, and the judgment of the greatest men, and, to crown all, the voice of the Church, have favored the Scholastic philosophy. Moreover, to the old teaching a novel system of philosophy has succeeded here and there, in which We fail to perceive those desirable and wholesome fruits which the Church and civil society itself would prefer. For it pleased the struggling innovators of the sixteenth century to philosophize without any respect for faith, the power of inventing in accordance with his own pleasure and bent being asked and given in turn by each one. Hence, it was natural that systems of philosophy multiplied beyond measure, and conclusions differing and clashing one with another arose about those matters even which are the most important in human knowledge. From a mass of conclusions men often come to wavering and doubt; and who knows not how easily the mind slips from doubt to error? But, as men

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<sup>37</sup> Bucer.

are apt to follow the lead given them, this new pursuit seems to have caught the souls of certain Catholic philosophers, who, throwing aside the patrimony of ancient wisdom, chose rather to build up a new edifice than to strengthen and complete the old by aid of the new-ill-advisedly, in sooth, and not without detriment to the sciences. For, a multiform system of this kind, which depends on the authority and choice of any professor, has a foundation open to change, and consequently gives us a philosophy not firm, and stable, and robust like that of old, but tottering and feeble. And if, perchance, it sometimes finds itself scarcely equal to sustain the shock of its foes, it should recognize that the cause and the blame lie in itself. In saying this We have no intention of discountenancing the learned and able men who bring their industry and erudition, and, what is more, the wealth of new discoveries, to the service of philosophy; for, of course, We understand that this tends to the development of learning. But one should be very careful lest all or his chief labor be exhausted in these pursuits and in mere erudition. And the same thing is true of sacred theology, which, indeed, may be assisted and illustrated by all kinds of erudition, though it is absolutely necessary to approach it in the grave manner of the Scholastics, in order that, the forces of revelation and reason being united in it, it may continue

to be “the invincible bulwark of the faith.”<sup>38</sup>

25. With wise forethought, therefore, not a few of the advocates of philosophic studies, when turning their minds recently to the practical reform of philosophy, aimed and aim at restoring the renowned teaching of Thomas Aquinas and winning it back to its ancient beauty.

26. We have learned with great joy that many members of your order, venerable brethren, have taken this plan to heart; and while We earnestly commend their efforts, We exhort them to hold fast to their purpose, and remind each and all of you that Our first and most cherished idea is that you should all furnish to studious youth a generous and copious supply of those purest streams of wisdom flowing inexhaustibly from the precious fountainhead of the Angelic Doctor.

27. Many are the reasons why We are so desirous of this. In the first place, then, since in the tempest that is on us the Christian faith is being constantly assailed by the machinations and craft of a certain false wisdom, all youths, but especially those who are the growing hope of the Church, should be nourished on the strong and robust food of doctrine, that so, mighty in strength and armed at all points, they may become habituated to advance the cause of religion with force and judgment, “being ready always, according to the apostolic

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<sup>38</sup> Sixtus V, Bulla *Triumphantis*.

counsel, to satisfy every one that asketh you a reason of that hope which is in you,"<sup>39</sup> and that they may be able to exhort in sound doctrine and to convince the gainsayers."<sup>40</sup> Many of those who, with minds alienated from the faith, hate Catholic institutions, claim reason as their sole mistress and guide. Now, We think that, apart from the supernatural help of God, nothing is better calculated to heal those minds and to bring them into favor with the Catholic faith than the solid doctrine of the Fathers and the Scholastics, who so clearly and forcibly demonstrate the firm foundations of the faith, its divine origin, its certain truth, the arguments that sustain it, the benefits it has conferred on the human race, and its perfect accord with reason, in a manner to satisfy completely minds open to persuasion, however unwilling and repugnant.

28. Domestic and civil society even, which, as all see, is exposed to great danger from this plague of perverse opinions, would certainly enjoy a far more peaceful and secure existence if a more wholesome doctrine were taught in the universities and high schools-one more in conformity with the teaching of the Church, such as is contained in the works of Thomas Aquinas.

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<sup>39</sup> 1 Peter 3:15.

<sup>40</sup> Titus 1:9.

29. For, the teachings of Thomas on the true meaning of liberty, which at this time is running into license, on the divine origin of all authority, on laws and their force, on the paternal and just rule of princes, on obedience to the higher powers, on mutual charity one toward another-on all of these and kindred subjects-have very great and invincible force to overturn those principles of the new order which are well known to be dangerous to the peaceful order of things and to public safety. In short, all studies ought to find hope of advancement and promise of assistance in this restoration of philosophic discipline which We have proposed. The arts were wont to draw from philosophy, as from a wise mistress, sound judgment and right method, and from it, also, their spirit, as from the common fount of life. When philosophy stood stainless in honor and wise in judgment, then, as facts and constant experience showed, the liberal arts flourished as never before or since; but, neglected and almost blotted out, they lay prone, since philosophy began to lean to error and join hands with folly. Nor will the physical sciences themselves, which are now in such great repute, and by the renown of so many inventions draw such universal admiration to themselves, suffer detriment, but find very great assistance in the restoration of the ancient philosophy. For, the investigation of facts and the contemplation of nature is not alone sufficient for their profitable



exercise and advance; but, when facts have been established, it is necessary to rise and apply ourselves to the study of the nature of corporeal things, to inquire into the laws which govern them and the principles whence their order and varied unity and mutual attraction in diversity arise. To such investigations it is wonderful what force and light and aid the Scholastic philosophy, if judiciously taught, would bring.

30. And here it is well to note that our philosophy can only by the grossest injustice be accused of being opposed to the advance and development of natural science. For, when the Scholastics, following the opinion of the holy Fathers, always held in anthropology that the human intelligence is only led to the knowledge of things without body and matter by things sensible, they well understood that nothing was of greater use to the philosopher than diligently to search into the mysteries of nature and to be earnest and constant in the study of physical things. And this they confirmed by their own example; for St. Thomas, Blessed Albertus Magnus, and other leaders of the Scholastics were never so wholly rapt in the study of philosophy as not to give large attention to the knowledge of natural things; and, indeed, the number of their sayings and writings on these subjects, which recent professors approve of and admit to harmonize with truth, is by no means small. Moreover, in this very age many illustrious professors of the physical sciences

openly testify that between certain and accepted conclusions of modern physics and the philosophic principles of the schools there is no conflict worthy of the name.

31. While, therefore, We hold that every word of wisdom, every useful thing by whomsoever discovered or planned, ought to be received with a willing and grateful mind, We exhort you, venerable brethren, in all earnestness to restore the golden wisdom of St. Thomas, and to spread it far and wide for the defense and beauty of the Catholic faith, for the good of society, and for the advantage of all the sciences. The wisdom of St. Thomas, We say; for if anything is taken up with too great subtlety by the Scholastic doctors, or too carelessly stated-if there be anything that ill agrees with the discoveries of a later age, or, in a word, improbable in whatever way-it does not enter Our mind to propose that for imitation to Our age. Let carefully selected teachers endeavor to implant the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas in the minds of students, and set forth clearly his solidity and excellence over others. Let the universities already founded or to be founded by you illustrate and defend this doctrine, and use it for the refutation of prevailing errors. But, lest the false for the true or the corrupt for the pure be drunk in, be ye watchful that the doctrine of Thomas be drawn from his own fountains, or at least from those rivulets which, derived from the very fount, have thus far flowed,

according to the established agreement of learned men, pure and clear; be careful to guard the minds of youth from those which are said to flow thence, but in reality are gathered from strange and unwholesome streams.

32. But well do We know that vain will be Our efforts unless, venerable brethren, He helps Our common cause who, in the words of divine Scripture, is called the God of all knowledge;<sup>41</sup> by which we are also admonished that “every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights,”<sup>42</sup> and again: “If any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men abundantly, and upbraideth not: and it shall be given him.”<sup>43</sup>

33. Therefore in this also let us follow the example of the Angelic Doctor, who never gave himself to reading or writing without first begging the blessing of God, who modestly confessed that whatever he knew he had acquired not so much by his own study and labor as by the divine gift; and therefore let us all, in humble and united prayer, beseech God to send forth the spirit of knowledge and of understanding to the children of the Church and open their senses for the understanding of wisdom. And that we may receive

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<sup>41</sup> 1 Kings 2:3.

<sup>42</sup> James 1:17.

<sup>43</sup> James 1:5

fuller fruits of the divine goodness, offer up to God the most efficacious patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is called the seat of wisdom; having at the same time as advocates St. Joseph, the most chaste spouse of the Virgin, and Peter and Paul, the chiefs of the Apostles, whose truth renewed the earth which had fallen under the impure blight of error, filling it with the light of heavenly wisdom.

34. In fine, relying on the divine assistance and confiding in your pastoral zeal, most lovingly We bestow on all of you, venerable brethren, on all the clergy and the flocks committed to your charge, the apostolic benediction as a pledge of heavenly gifts and a token of Our special esteem.

*Given at St. Peter's, in Rome, the fourth day of August, 1879, the second year of our pontificate.*

LEO XIII

# TREATISE ON SACRED DOCTRINE [1](Q[1])

## THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF SACRED DOCTRINE (TEN ARTICLES)

**Whether, besides philosophy, any further doctrine is required?**

*Objection 1:* It seems that, besides philosophical science, we have no need of any further knowledge. For man should not seek to know what is above reason: “Seek not the things that are too high for thee” (Ecclus. 3:22). But whatever is not above reason is fully treated of in philosophical science. Therefore any other knowledge besides philosophical science is superfluous.

*Objection 2:* Further, knowledge can be concerned only with being, for nothing can be known, save what is true; and all that is, is true. But everything that is, is treated of in philosophical science—even God Himself; so that there is a part of philosophy called theology, or the divine science, as Aristotle has proved (Metaph. vi). Therefore, besides philosophical science, there is no need of any further knowledge.

*On the contrary,* It is written (2 Tim. 3:16): “All Scripture, inspired of God is profitable to teach, to

reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice.” Now Scripture, inspired of God, is no part of philosophical science, which has been built up by human reason. Therefore it is useful that besides philosophical science, there should be other knowledge, i.e. inspired of God.

*I answer that,* It was necessary for man's salvation that there should be a knowledge revealed by God besides philosophical science built up by human reason. Firstly, indeed, because man is directed to God, as to an end that surpasses the grasp of his reason: “The eye hath not seen, O God, besides Thee, what things Thou hast prepared for them that wait for Thee” (Is. 66:4). But the end must first be known by men who are to direct their thoughts and actions to the end. Hence it was necessary for the salvation of man that certain truths which exceed human reason should be made known to him by divine revelation. Even as regards those truths about God which human reason could have discovered, it was necessary that man should be taught by a divine revelation; because the truth about God such as reason could discover, would only be known by a few, and that after a long time, and with the admixture of many errors. Whereas man's whole salvation, which is in God, depends upon the knowledge of this truth. Therefore, in order that the salvation of men might be brought about more fitly and more surely, it was necessary that they should be taught divine truths by divine revelation. It was therefore

necessary that besides philosophical science built up by reason, there should be a sacred science learned through revelation.

*Reply to Objection 1:* Although those things which are beyond man's knowledge may not be sought for by man through his reason, nevertheless, once they are revealed by God, they must be accepted by faith. Hence the sacred text continues, "For many things are shown to thee above the understanding of man" (Ecclus. 3:25). And in this, the sacred science consists.

*Reply to Objection 2:* Sciences are differentiated according to the various means through which knowledge is obtained. For the astronomer and the physicist both may prove the same conclusion: that the earth, for instance, is round: the astronomer by means of mathematics (i.e. abstracting from matter), but the physicist by means of matter itself. Hence there is no reason why those things which may be learned from philosophical science, so far as they can be known by natural reason, may not also be taught us by another science so far as they fall within revelation. Hence theology included in sacred doctrine differs in kind from that theology which is part of philosophy.

### **Whether sacred doctrine is a science?**

*Objection 1:* It seems that sacred doctrine is not a science. For every science proceeds from self-evident

principles. But sacred doctrine proceeds from articles of faith which are not self-evident, since their truth is not admitted by all: “For all men have not faith” (2 Thess. 3:2). Therefore sacred doctrine is not a science.

*Objection 2:* Further, no science deals with individual facts. But this sacred science treats of individual facts, such as the deeds of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and such like. Therefore sacred doctrine is not a science.

*On the contrary,* Augustine says (De Trin. xiv, 1) “to this science alone belongs that whereby saving faith is begotten, nourished, protected and strengthened.” But this can be said of no science except sacred doctrine. Therefore sacred doctrine is a science.

*I answer that,* Sacred doctrine is a science. We must bear in mind that there are two kinds of sciences. There are some which proceed from a principle known by the natural light of intelligence, such as arithmetic and geometry and the like. There are some which proceed from principles known by the light of a higher science: thus the science of perspective proceeds from principles established by geometry, and music from principles established by arithmetic. So it is that sacred doctrine is a science because it proceeds from principles established by the light of a higher science, namely, the science of God and the blessed. Hence, just as the musician accepts on authority the principles taught him by the mathematician, so sacred science is



established on principles revealed by God.

*Reply to Objection 1:* The principles of any science are either in themselves self-evident, or reducible to the conclusions of a higher science; and such, as we have said, are the principles of sacred doctrine.

*Reply to Objection 2:* Individual facts are treated of in sacred doctrine, not because it is concerned with them principally, but they are introduced rather both as examples to be followed in our lives (as in moral sciences) and in order to establish the authority of those men through whom the divine revelation, on which this sacred scripture or doctrine is based, has come down to us.

### **Whether sacred doctrine is one science?**

*Objection 1:* It seems that sacred doctrine is not one science; for according to the Philosopher (Poster. i) “that science is one which treats only of one class of subjects.” But the creator and the creature, both of whom are treated of in sacred doctrine, cannot be grouped together under one class of subjects. Therefore sacred doctrine is not one science.

*Objection 2:* Further, in sacred doctrine we treat of angels, corporeal creatures and human morality. But these belong to separate philosophical sciences. Therefore sacred doctrine cannot be one science.

*On the contrary*, Holy Scripture speaks of it as one science: “Wisdom gave him the knowledge (scientiam) of holy things” (Wis. 10:10).

*I answer that*, Sacred doctrine is one science. The unity of a faculty or habit is to be gauged by its object, not indeed, in its material aspect, but as regards the precise formality under which it is an object. For example, man, ass, stone agree in the one precise formality of being colored; and color is the formal object of sight. Therefore, because Sacred Scripture considers things precisely under the formality of being divinely revealed, whatever has been divinely revealed possesses the one precise formality of the object of this science; and therefore is included under sacred doctrine as under one science.

*Reply to Objection 1*: Sacred doctrine does not treat of God and creatures equally, but of God primarily, and of creatures only so far as they are referable to God as their beginning or end. Hence the unity of this science is not impaired.

*Reply to Objection 2*: Nothing prevents inferior faculties or habits from being differentiated by something which falls under a higher faculty or habit as well; because the higher faculty or habit regards the object in its more universal formality, as the object of the “common sense” is whatever affects the senses, including, therefore, whatever is visible or audible. Hence the “common sense,” although one faculty,

extends to all the objects of the five senses. Similarly, objects which are the subject-matter of different philosophical sciences can yet be treated of by this one single sacred science under one aspect precisely so far as they can be included in revelation. So that in this way, sacred doctrine bears, as it were, the stamp of the divine science which is one and simple, yet extends to everything.

### **Whether sacred doctrine is a practical science?**

*Objection 1:* It seems that sacred doctrine is a practical science; for a practical science is that which ends in action according to the Philosopher (Metaph. ii). But sacred doctrine is ordained to action: “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22). Therefore sacred doctrine is a practical science.

*Objection 2:* Further, sacred doctrine is divided into the Old and the New Law. But law implies a moral science which is a practical science. Therefore sacred doctrine is a practical science.

*On the contrary,* Every practical science is concerned with human operations; as moral science is concerned with human acts, and architecture with buildings. But sacred doctrine is chiefly concerned with God, whose handiwork is especially man. Therefore it is not a practical but a speculative science.

*I answer that,* Sacred doctrine, being one, extends

to things which belong to different philosophical sciences because it considers in each the same formal aspect, namely, so far as they can be known through divine revelation. Hence, although among the philosophical sciences one is speculative and another practical, nevertheless sacred doctrine includes both; as God, by one and the same science, knows both Himself and His works. Still, it is speculative rather than practical because it is more concerned with divine things than with human acts; though it does treat even of these latter, inasmuch as man is ordained by them to the perfect knowledge of God in which consists eternal bliss. This is a sufficient answer to the Objections.

### **Whether sacred doctrine is nobler than other sciences?**

*Objection 1:* It seems that sacred doctrine is not nobler than other sciences; for the nobility of a science depends on the certitude it establishes. But other sciences, the principles of which cannot be doubted, seem to be more certain than sacred doctrine; for its principles-namely, articles of faith-can be doubted. Therefore other sciences seem to be nobler.

*Objection 2:* Further, it is the sign of a lower science to depend upon a higher; as music depends on arithmetic. But sacred doctrine does in a sense depend upon philosophical sciences; for Jerome observes, in

his Epistle to Magnus, that “the ancient doctors so enriched their books with the ideas and phrases of the philosophers, that thou knowest not what more to admire in them, their profane erudition or their scriptural learning.” Therefore sacred doctrine is inferior to other sciences.

*On the contrary,* Other sciences are called the handmaidens of this one: “Wisdom sent her maids to invite to the tower” (Prov. 9:3).

*I answer that,* Since this science is partly speculative and partly practical, it transcends all others speculative and practical. Now one speculative science is said to be nobler than another, either by reason of its greater certitude, or by reason of the higher worth of its subject-matter. In both these respects this science surpasses other speculative sciences; in point of greater certitude, because other sciences derive their certitude from the natural light of human reason, which can err; whereas this derives its certitude from the light of divine knowledge, which cannot be misled: in point of the higher worth of its subject-matter because this science treats chiefly of those things which by their sublimity transcend human reason; while other sciences consider only those things which are within reason's grasp. Of the practical sciences, that one is nobler which is ordained to a further purpose, as political science is nobler than military science; for the good of the army is directed to the good of the State. But the

purpose of this science, in so far as it is practical, is eternal bliss; to which as to an ultimate end the purposes of every practical science are directed. Hence it is clear that from every standpoint, it is nobler than other sciences.

*Reply to Objection 1:* It may well happen that what is in itself the more certain may seem to us the less certain on account of the weakness of our intelligence, “which is dazzled by the clearest objects of nature; as the owl is dazzled by the light of the sun” (Metaph. ii, lect. i). Hence the fact that some happen to doubt about articles of faith is not due to the uncertain nature of the truths, but to the weakness of human intelligence; yet the slenderest knowledge that may be obtained of the highest things is more desirable than the most certain knowledge obtained of lesser things, as is said in *de Animalibus* xi.

*Reply to Objection 2:* This science can in a sense depend upon the philosophical sciences, not as though it stood in need of them, but only in order to make its teaching clearer. For it accepts its principles not from other sciences, but immediately from God, by revelation. Therefore it does not depend upon other sciences as upon the higher, but makes use of them as of the lesser, and as handmaidens: even so the master sciences make use of the sciences that supply their materials, as political of military science. That it thus uses them is not due to its own defect or insufficiency,

but to the defect of our intelligence, which is more easily led by what is known through natural reason (from which proceed the other sciences) to that which is above reason, such as are the teachings of this science.

### **Whether this doctrine is the same as wisdom?**

*Objection 1:* It seems that this doctrine is not the same as wisdom. For no doctrine which borrows its principles is worthy of the name of wisdom; seeing that the wise man directs, and is not directed (Metaph. i). But this doctrine borrows its principles. Therefore this science is not wisdom.

*Objection 2:* Further, it is a part of wisdom to prove the principles of other sciences. Hence it is called the chief of sciences, as is clear in Ethic. vi. But this doctrine does not prove the principles of other sciences. Therefore it is not the same as wisdom.

*Objection 3:* Further, this doctrine is acquired by study, whereas wisdom is acquired by God's inspiration; so that it is numbered among the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Is. 11:2). Therefore this doctrine is not the same as wisdom.

*On the contrary,* It is written (Dt. 4:6): "This is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of nations."

*I answer that,* This doctrine is wisdom above all

human wisdom; not merely in any one order, but absolutely. For since it is the part of a wise man to arrange and to judge, and since lesser matters should be judged in the light of some higher principle, he is said to be wise in any one order who considers the highest principle in that order: thus in the order of building, he who plans the form of the house is called wise and architect, in opposition to the inferior laborers who trim the wood and make ready the stones: “As a wise architect, I have laid the foundation” (1 Cor. 3:10). Again, in the order of all human life, the prudent man is called wise, inasmuch as he directs his acts to a fitting end: “Wisdom is prudence to a man” (Prov. 10: 23). Therefore he who considers absolutely the highest cause of the whole universe, namely God, is most of all called wise. Hence wisdom is said to be the knowledge of divine things, as Augustine says (De Trin. xii, 14). But sacred doctrine essentially treats of God viewed as the highest cause-not only so far as He can be known through creatures just as philosophers knew Him-“That which is known of God is manifest in them” (Rom. 1:19)-but also as far as He is known to Himself alone and revealed to others. Hence sacred doctrine is especially called wisdom.

*Reply to Objection 1:* Sacred doctrine derives its principles not from any human knowledge, but from the divine knowledge, through which, as through the highest wisdom, all our knowledge is set in order.



*Reply to Objection 2:* The principles of other sciences either are evident and cannot be proved, or are proved by natural reason through some other science. But the knowledge proper to this science comes through revelation and not through natural reason. Therefore it has no concern to prove the principles of other sciences, but only to judge of them. Whatsoever is found in other sciences contrary to any truth of this science must be condemned as false: “Destroying counsels and every height that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God” (2 Cor. 10:4,5).

*Reply to Objection 3:* Since judgment appertains to wisdom, the twofold manner of judging produces a twofold wisdom. A man may judge in one way by inclination, as whoever has the habit of a virtue judges rightly of what concerns that virtue by his very inclination towards it. Hence it is the virtuous man, as we read, who is the measure and rule of human acts. In another way, by knowledge, just as a man learned in moral science might be able to judge rightly about virtuous acts, though he had not the virtue. The first manner of judging divine things belongs to that wisdom which is set down among the gifts of the Holy Ghost: “The spiritual man judgeth all things” (1 Cor. 2:15). And Dionysius says (Div. Nom. ii): “Hierotheus is taught not by mere learning, but by experience of divine things.” The second manner of judging belongs to this doctrine which is acquired by study, though its

principles are obtained by revelation.

## **Whether God is the object of this science?**

*Objection 1:* It seems that God is not the object of this science. For in every science, the nature of its object is presupposed. But this science cannot presuppose the essence of God, for Damascene says (De Fide Orth. i, iv): “It is impossible to define the essence of God.” Therefore God is not the object of this science.

*Objection 2:* Further, whatever conclusions are reached in any science must be comprehended under the object of the science. But in Holy Writ we reach conclusions not only concerning God, but concerning many other things, such as creatures and human morality. Therefore God is not the object of this science.

*On the contrary,* The object of the science is that of which it principally treats. But in this science, the treatment is mainly about God; for it is called theology, as treating of God. Therefore God is the object of this science.

*I answer that,* God is the object of this science. The relation between a science and its object is the same as that between a habit or faculty and its object. Now properly speaking, the object of a faculty or habit is the thing under the aspect of which all things are

referred to that faculty or habit, as man and stone are referred to the faculty of sight in that they are colored. Hence colored things are the proper objects of sight. But in sacred science, all things are treated of under the aspect of God: either because they are God Himself or because they refer to God as their beginning and end. Hence it follows that God is in very truth the object of this science. This is clear also from the principles of this science, namely, the articles of faith, for faith is about God. The object of the principles and of the whole science must be the same, since the whole science is contained virtually in its principles. Some, however, looking to what is treated of in this science, and not to the aspect under which it is treated, have asserted the object of this science to be something other than God—that is, either things and signs; or the works of salvation; or the whole Christ, as the head and members. Of all these things, in truth, we treat in this science, but so far as they have reference to God.

*Reply to Objection 1:* Although we cannot know in what consists the essence of God, nevertheless in this science we make use of His effects, either of nature or of grace, in place of a definition, in regard to whatever is treated of in this science concerning God; even as in some philosophical sciences we demonstrate something about a cause from its effect, by taking the effect in place of a definition of the cause.

*Reply to Objection 2:* Whatever other conclusions

are reached in this sacred science are comprehended under God, not as parts or species or accidents but as in some way related to Him.

### **Whether sacred doctrine is a matter of argument?**

*Objection 1:* It seems this doctrine is not a matter of argument. For Ambrose says (De Fide 1): “Put arguments aside where faith is sought.” But in this doctrine, faith especially is sought: “But these things are written that you may believe” (Jn. 20:31). Therefore sacred doctrine is not a matter of argument.

*Objection 2:* Further, if it is a matter of argument, the argument is either from authority or from reason. If it is from authority, it seems unbecoming its dignity, for the proof from authority is the weakest form of proof. But if it is from reason, this is unbecoming its end, because, according to Gregory (Hom. 26), “faith has no merit in those things of which human reason brings its own experience.” Therefore sacred doctrine is not a matter of argument.

*On the contrary,* The Scripture says that a bishop should “embrace that faithful word which is according to doctrine, that he may be able to exhort in sound doctrine and to convince the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9).

*I answer that,* As other sciences do not argue in proof of their principles, but argue from their principles to demonstrate other truths in these sciences: so this

doctrine does not argue in proof of its principles, which are the articles of faith, but from them it goes on to prove something else; as the Apostle from the resurrection of Christ argues in proof of the general resurrection (1 Cor. 15). However, it is to be borne in mind, in regard to the philosophical sciences, that the inferior sciences neither prove their principles nor dispute with those who deny them, but leave this to a higher science; whereas the highest of them, viz. metaphysics, can dispute with one who denies its principles, if only the opponent will make some concession; but if he concede nothing, it can have no dispute with him, though it can answer his objections. Hence Sacred Scripture, since it has no science above itself, can dispute with one who denies its principles only if the opponent admits some at least of the truths obtained through divine revelation; thus we can argue with heretics from texts in Holy Writ, and against those who deny one article of faith, we can argue from another. If our opponent believes nothing of divine revelation, there is no longer any means of proving the articles of faith by reasoning, but only of answering his objections-if he has any-against faith. Since faith rests upon infallible truth, and since the contrary of a truth can never be demonstrated, it is clear that the arguments brought against faith cannot be demonstrations, but are difficulties that can be answered.

*Reply to Objection 1:* Although arguments from human reason cannot avail to prove what must be received on faith, nevertheless, this doctrine argues from articles of faith to other truths.

*Reply to Objection 2:* This doctrine is especially based upon arguments from authority, inasmuch as its principles are obtained by revelation: thus we ought to believe on the authority of those to whom the revelation has been made. Nor does this take away from the dignity of this doctrine, for although the argument from authority based on human reason is the weakest, yet the argument from authority based on divine revelation is the strongest. But sacred doctrine makes use even of human reason, not, indeed, to prove faith (for thereby the merit of faith would come to an end), but to make clear other things that are put forward in this doctrine. Since therefore grace does not destroy nature but perfects it, natural reason should minister to faith as the natural bent of the will ministers to charity. Hence the Apostle says: “Bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5). Hence sacred doctrine makes use also of the authority of philosophers in those questions in which they were able to know the truth by natural reason, as Paul quotes a saying of Aratus: “As some also of your own poets said: For we are also His offspring” (Acts 17:28). Nevertheless, sacred doctrine makes use of these authorities as extrinsic and probable arguments;

but properly uses the authority of the canonical Scriptures as an incontrovertible proof, and the authority of the doctors of the Church as one that may properly be used, yet merely as probable. For our faith rests upon the revelation made to the apostles and prophets who wrote the canonical books, and not on the revelations (if any such there are) made to other doctors. Hence Augustine says (Epis. ad Hieron. xix, 1): “Only those books of Scripture which are called canonical have I learned to hold in such honor as to believe their authors have not erred in any way in writing them. But other authors I so read as not to deem everything in their works to be true, merely on account of their having so thought and written, whatever may have been their holiness and learning.”

### **Whether Holy Scripture should use metaphors?**

*Objection 1:* It seems that Holy Scripture should not use metaphors. For that which is proper to the lowest science seems not to befit this science, which holds the highest place of all. But to proceed by the aid of various similitudes and figures is proper to poetry, the least of all the sciences. Therefore it is not fitting that this science should make use of such similitudes.

*Objection 2:* Further, this doctrine seems to be intended to make truth clear. Hence a reward is held out to those who manifest it: “They that explain me shall

have life everlasting” (Ecclus. 24:31). But by such similitudes truth is obscured. Therefore, to put forward divine truths by likening them to corporeal things does not befit this science.

*Objection 3:* Further, the higher creatures are, the nearer they approach to the divine likeness. If therefore any creature be taken to represent God, this representation ought chiefly to be taken from the higher creatures, and not from the lower; yet this is often found in Scriptures.

*On the contrary,* It is written (Osee 12:10): “I have multiplied visions, and I have used similitudes by the ministry of the prophets.” But to put forward anything by means of similitudes is to use metaphors. Therefore this sacred science may use metaphors.

*I answer that,* It is befitting Holy Writ to put forward divine and spiritual truths by means of comparisons with material things. For God provides for everything according to the capacity of its nature. Now it is natural to man to attain to intellectual truths through sensible objects, because all our knowledge originates from sense. Hence in Holy Writ, spiritual truths are fittingly taught under the likeness of material things. This is what Dionysius says (Coel. Hier. i): “We cannot be enlightened by the divine rays except they be hidden within the covering of many sacred veils.” It is also befitting Holy Writ, which is proposed to all without distinction of persons-“To the wise and to the



unwise I am a debtor” (Rom. 1:14)-that spiritual truths be expounded by means of figures taken from corporeal things, in order that thereby even the simple who are unable by themselves to grasp intellectual things may be able to understand it.

*Reply to Objection 1:* Poetry makes use of metaphors to produce a representation, for it is natural to man to be pleased with representations. But sacred doctrine makes use of metaphors as both necessary and useful.

*Reply to Objection 2:* The ray of divine revelation is not extinguished by the sensible imagery wherewith it is veiled, as Dionysius says (Coel. Hier. i); and its truth so far remains that it does not allow the minds of those to whom the revelation has been made, to rest in the metaphors, but raises them to the knowledge of truths; and through those to whom the revelation has been made others also may receive instruction in these matters. Hence those things that are taught metaphorically in one part of Scripture, in other parts are taught more openly. The very hiding of truth in figures is useful for the exercise of thoughtful minds and as a defense against the ridicule of the impious, according to the words “Give not that which is holy to dogs” (Mat. 7:6).

*Reply to Objection 3:* As Dionysius says, (Coel. Hier. i) it is more fitting that divine truths should be expounded under the figure of less noble than of nobler

bodies, and this for three reasons. Firstly, because thereby men's minds are the better preserved from error. For then it is clear that these things are not literal descriptions of divine truths, which might have been open to doubt had they been expressed under the figure of nobler bodies, especially for those who could think of nothing nobler than bodies. Secondly, because this is more befitting the knowledge of God that we have in this life. For what He is not is clearer to us than what He is. Therefore similitudes drawn from things farthest away from God form within us a truer estimate that God is above whatsoever we may say or think of Him. Thirdly, because thereby divine truths are the better hidden from the unworthy.

### **Whether in Holy Scripture a word may have several senses?**

*Objection 1:* It seems that in Holy Writ a word cannot have several senses, historical or literal, allegorical, tropological or moral, and anagogical. For many different senses in one text produce confusion and deception and destroy all force of argument. Hence no argument, but only fallacies, can be deduced from a multiplicity of propositions. But Holy Writ ought to be able to state the truth without any fallacy. Therefore in it there cannot be several senses to a word.

*Objection 2:* Further, Augustine says (De util.

cred. iii) that “the Old Testament has a fourfold division as to history, etiology, analogy and allegory.” Now these four seem altogether different from the four divisions mentioned in the first objection. Therefore it does not seem fitting to explain the same word of Holy Writ according to the four different senses mentioned above.

*Objection 3:* Further, besides these senses, there is the parabolical, which is not one of these four.

*On the contrary,* Gregory says (Moral. xx, 1): “Holy Writ by the manner of its speech transcends every science, because in one and the same sentence, while it describes a fact, it reveals a mystery.”

*I answer that,* The author of Holy Writ is God, in whose power it is to signify His meaning, not by words only (as man also can do), but also by things themselves. So, whereas in every other science things are signified by words, this science has the property, that the things signified by the words have themselves also a signification. Therefore that first signification whereby words signify things belongs to the first sense, the historical or literal. That signification whereby things signified by words have themselves also a signification is called the spiritual sense, which is based on the literal, and presupposes it. Now this spiritual sense has a threefold division. For as the Apostle says (Heb. 10:1) the Old Law is a figure of the New Law, and Dionysius says (Coel. Hier. i) “the New Law itself

is a figure of future glory.” Again, in the New Law, whatever our Head has done is a type of what we ought to do. Therefore, so far as the things of the Old Law signify the things of the New Law, there is the allegorical sense; so far as the things done in Christ, or so far as the things which signify Christ, are types of what we ought to do, there is the moral sense. But so far as they signify what relates to eternal glory, there is the anagogical sense. Since the literal sense is that which the author intends, and since the author of Holy Writ is God, Who by one act comprehends all things by His intellect, it is not unfitting, as Augustine says (Confess. xii), if, even according to the literal sense, one word in Holy Writ should have several senses.

*Reply to Objection 1:* The multiplicity of these senses does not produce equivocation or any other kind of multiplicity, seeing that these senses are not multiplied because one word signifies several things, but because the things signified by the words can be themselves types of other things. Thus in Holy Writ no confusion results, for all the senses are founded on one—the literal—from which alone can any argument be drawn, and not from those intended in allegory, as Augustine says (Epis. 48). Nevertheless, nothing of Holy Scripture perishes on account of this, since nothing necessary to faith is contained under the spiritual sense which is not elsewhere put forward by the Scripture in its literal sense.

*Reply to Objection 2:* These three-history, etiology, analogy-are grouped under the literal sense. For it is called history, as Augustine expounds (Epis. 48), whenever anything is simply related; it is called etiology when its cause is assigned, as when Our Lord gave the reason why Moses allowed the putting away of wives-namely, on account of the hardness of men's hearts; it is called analogy whenever the truth of one text of Scripture is shown not to contradict the truth of another. Of these four, allegory alone stands for the three spiritual senses. Thus Hugh of St. Victor (Sacram. iv, 4 Prolog.) includes the anagogical under the allegorical sense, laying down three senses only-the historical, the allegorical, and the tropological.

*Reply to Objection 3:* The parabolical sense is contained in the literal, for by words things are signified properly and figuratively. Nor is the figure itself, but that which is figured, the literal sense. When Scripture speaks of God's arm, the literal sense is not that God has such a member, but only what is signified by this member, namely operative power. Hence it is plain that nothing false can ever underlie the literal sense of Holy Writ.

# TREATISE ON THE ONE GOD (QQ[2]-26)

## THE EXISTENCE OF GOD (THREE ARTICLES)

### Whether the existence of God is self-evident?

*Objection 1:* It seems that the existence of God is self-evident. Now those things are said to be self-evident to us the knowledge of which is naturally implanted in us, as we can see in regard to first principles. But as Damascene says (De Fide Orth. i, 1,3), “the knowledge of God is naturally implanted in all.” Therefore the existence of God is self-evident.

*Objection 2:* Further, those things are said to be self-evident which are known as soon as the terms are known, which the Philosopher (1 Poster. iii) says is true of the first principles of demonstration. Thus, when the nature of a whole and of a part is known, it is at once recognized that every whole is greater than its part. But as soon as the signification of the word “God” is understood, it is at once seen that God exists. For by this word is signified that thing than which nothing greater can be conceived. But that which exists actually and mentally is greater than that which exists only mentally. Therefore, since as soon as the word “God” is understood it exists mentally, it also follows that it

exists actually. Therefore the proposition “God exists” is self-evident.

*Objection 3:* Further, the existence of truth is self-evident. For whoever denies the existence of truth grants that truth does not exist: and, if truth does not exist, then the proposition “Truth does not exist” is true: and if there is anything true, there must be truth. But God is truth itself: “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (Jn. 14:6) Therefore “God exists” is self-evident.

*On the contrary,* No one can mentally admit the opposite of what is self-evident; as the Philosopher (Metaph. iv, lect. vi) states concerning the first principles of demonstration. But the opposite of the proposition “God is” can be mentally admitted: “The fool said in his heart, There is no God” (Ps. 52:1). Therefore, that God exists is not self-evident.

*I answer that,* A thing can be self-evident in either of two ways: on the one hand, self-evident in itself, though not to us; on the other, self-evident in itself, and to us. A proposition is self-evident because the predicate is included in the essence of the subject, as “Man is an animal,” for animal is contained in the essence of man. If, therefore the essence of the predicate and subject be known to all, the proposition will be self-evident to all; as is clear with regard to the first principles of demonstration, the terms of which are common things that no one is ignorant of, such as being and non-being, whole and part, and such like. If,

however, there are some to whom the essence of the predicate and subject is unknown, the proposition will be self-evident in itself, but not to those who do not know the meaning of the predicate and subject of the proposition. Therefore, it happens, as Boethius says (Hebdom., the title of which is: "Whether all that is, is good"), "that there are some mental concepts self-evident only to the learned, as that incorporeal substances are not in space." Therefore I say that this proposition, "God exists," of itself is self-evident, for the predicate is the same as the subject, because God is His own existence as will be hereafter shown ([2]Q[3], A[4]). Now because we do not know the essence of God, the proposition is not self-evident to us; but needs to be demonstrated by things that are more known to us, though less known in their nature-namely, by effects.

*Reply to Objection 1:* To know that God exists in a general and confused way is implanted in us by nature, inasmuch as God is man's beatitude. For man naturally desires happiness, and what is naturally desired by man must be naturally known to him. This, however, is not to know absolutely that God exists; just as to know that someone is approaching is not the same as to know that Peter is approaching, even though it is Peter who is approaching; for many there are who imagine that man's perfect good which is happiness, consists in riches, and others in pleasures, and others in



something else.

*Reply to Objection 2:* Perhaps not everyone who hears this word “God” understands it to signify something than which nothing greater can be thought, seeing that some have believed God to be a body. Yet, granted that everyone understands that by this word “God” is signified something than which nothing greater can be thought, nevertheless, it does not therefore follow that he understands that what the word signifies exists actually, but only that it exists mentally. Nor can it be argued that it actually exists, unless it be admitted that there actually exists something than which nothing greater can be thought; and this precisely is not admitted by those who hold that God does not exist.

*Reply to Objection 3:* The existence of truth in general is self-evident but the existence of a Primal Truth is not self-evident to us.

## **Whether it can be demonstrated that God exists?**

*Objection 1:* It seems that the existence of God cannot be demonstrated. For it is an article of faith that God exists. But what is of faith cannot be demonstrated, because a demonstration produces scientific knowledge; whereas faith is of the unseen (Heb. 11:1). Therefore it cannot be demonstrated that God exists.

*Objection 2:* Further, the essence is the middle term of demonstration. But we cannot know in what God's essence consists, but solely in what it does not consist; as Damascene says (De Fide Orth. i, 4). Therefore we cannot demonstrate that God exists.

*Objection 3:* Further, if the existence of God were demonstrated, this could only be from His effects. But His effects are not proportionate to Him, since He is infinite and His effects are finite; and between the finite and infinite there is no proportion. Therefore, since a cause cannot be demonstrated by an effect not proportionate to it, it seems that the existence of God cannot be demonstrated.

*On the contrary,* The Apostle says: "The invisible things of Him are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made" (Rom. 1:20). But this would not be unless the existence of God could be demonstrated through the things that are made; for the first thing we must know of anything is whether it exists.

*I answer that,* Demonstration can be made in two ways: One is through the cause, and is called "a priori," and this is to argue from what is prior absolutely. The other is through the effect, and is called a demonstration "a posteriori"; this is to argue from what is prior relatively only to us. When an effect is better known to us than its cause, from the effect we proceed to the knowledge of the cause. And from every effect the existence of its proper cause can be demonstrated,

so long as its effects are better known to us; because since every effect depends upon its cause, if the effect exists, the cause must pre-exist. Hence the existence of God, in so far as it is not self-evident to us, can be demonstrated from those of His effects which are known to us.

*Reply to Objection 1:* The existence of God and other like truths about God, which can be known by natural reason, are not articles of faith, but are preambles to the articles; for faith presupposes natural knowledge, even as grace presupposes nature, and perfection supposes something that can be perfected. Nevertheless, there is nothing to prevent a man, who cannot grasp a proof, accepting, as a matter of faith, something which in itself is capable of being scientifically known and demonstrated.

*Reply to Objection 2:* When the existence of a cause is demonstrated from an effect, this effect takes the place of the definition of the cause in proof of the cause's existence. This is especially the case in regard to God, because, in order to prove the existence of anything, it is necessary to accept as a middle term the meaning of the word, and not its essence, for the question of its essence follows on the question of its existence. Now the names given to God are derived from His effects; consequently, in demonstrating the existence of God from His effects, we may take for the middle term the meaning of the word "God."

*Reply to Objection 3:* From effects not proportionate to the cause no perfect knowledge of that cause can be obtained. Yet from every effect the existence of the cause can be clearly demonstrated, and so we can demonstrate the existence of God from His effects; though from them we cannot perfectly know God as He is in His essence.

### **Whether God exists?**

*Objection 1:* It seems that God does not exist; because if one of two contraries be infinite, the other would be altogether destroyed. But the word “God” means that He is infinite goodness. If, therefore, God existed, there would be no evil discoverable; but there is evil in the world. Therefore God does not exist.

*Objection 2:* Further, it is superfluous to suppose that what can be accounted for by a few principles has been produced by many. But it seems that everything we see in the world can be accounted for by other principles, supposing God did not exist. For all natural things can be reduced to one principle which is nature; and all voluntary things can be reduced to one principle which is human reason, or will. Therefore there is no need to suppose God's existence.

*On the contrary,* It is said in the person of God: “I am Who am.” (Ex. 3:14)

*I answer that,* The existence of God can be

proved in five ways.

The first and more manifest way is the argument from motion. It is certain, and evident to our senses, that in the world some things are in motion. Now whatever is in motion is put in motion by another, for nothing can be in motion except it is in potentiality to that towards which it is in motion; whereas a thing moves inasmuch as it is in act. For motion is nothing else than the reduction of something from potentiality to actuality. But nothing can be reduced from potentiality to actuality, except by something in a state of actuality. Thus that which is actually hot, as fire, makes wood, which is potentially hot, to be actually hot, and thereby moves and changes it. Now it is not possible that the same thing should be at once in actuality and potentiality in the same respect, but only in different respects. For what is actually hot cannot simultaneously be potentially hot; but it is simultaneously potentially cold. It is therefore impossible that in the same respect and in the same way a thing should be both mover and moved, i.e. that it should move itself. Therefore, whatever is in motion must be put in motion by another. If that by which it is put in motion be itself put in motion, then this also must needs be put in motion by another, and that by another again. But this cannot go on to infinity, because then there would be no first mover, and, consequently, no other mover; seeing that subsequent movers move

only inasmuch as they are put in motion by the first mover; as the staff moves only because it is put in motion by the hand. Therefore it is necessary to arrive at a first mover, put in motion by no other; and this everyone understands to be God.

The second way is from the nature of the efficient cause. In the world of sense we find there is an order of efficient causes. There is no case known (neither is it, indeed, possible) in which a thing is found to be the efficient cause of itself; for so it would be prior to itself, which is impossible. Now in efficient causes it is not possible to go on to infinity, because in all efficient causes following in order, the first is the cause of the intermediate cause, and the intermediate is the cause of the ultimate cause, whether the intermediate cause be several, or only one. Now to take away the cause is to take away the effect. Therefore, if there be no first cause among efficient causes, there will be no ultimate, nor any intermediate cause. But if in efficient causes it is possible to go on to infinity, there will be no first efficient cause, neither will there be an ultimate effect, nor any intermediate efficient causes; all of which is plainly false. Therefore it is necessary to admit a first efficient cause, to which everyone gives the name of God.

The third way is taken from possibility and necessity, and runs thus. We find in nature things that are possible to be and not to be, since they are found to

be generated, and to corrupt, and consequently, they are possible to be and not to be. But it is impossible for these always to exist, for that which is possible not to be at some time is not. Therefore, if everything is possible not to be, then at one time there could have been nothing in existence. Now if this were true, even now there would be nothing in existence, because that which does not exist only begins to exist by something already existing. Therefore, if at one time nothing was in existence, it would have been impossible for anything to have begun to exist; and thus even now nothing would be in existence-which is absurd. Therefore, not all beings are merely possible, but there must exist something the existence of which is necessary. But every necessary thing either has its necessity caused by another, or not. Now it is impossible to go on to infinity in necessary things which have their necessity caused by another, as has been already proved in regard to efficient causes. Therefore we cannot but postulate the existence of some being having of itself its own necessity, and not receiving it from another, but rather causing in others their necessity. This all men speak of as God.

The fourth way is taken from the gradation to be found in things. Among beings there are some more and some less good, true, noble and the like. But “more” and “less” are predicated of different things, according as they resemble in their different ways

something which is the maximum, as a thing is said to be hotter according as it more nearly resembles that which is hottest; so that there is something which is truest, something best, something noblest and, consequently, something which is uttermost being; for those things that are greatest in truth are greatest in being, as it is written in *Metaph. ii*. Now the maximum in any genus is the cause of all in that genus; as fire, which is the maximum heat, is the cause of all hot things. Therefore there must also be something which is to all beings the cause of their being, goodness, and every other perfection; and this we call God.

The fifth way is taken from the governance of the world. We see that things which lack intelligence, such as natural bodies, act for an end, and this is evident from their acting always, or nearly always, in the same way, so as to obtain the best result. Hence it is plain that not fortuitously, but designedly, do they achieve their end. Now whatever lacks intelligence cannot move towards an end, unless it be directed by some being endowed with knowledge and intelligence; as the arrow is shot to its mark by the archer. Therefore some intelligent being exists by whom all natural things are directed to their end; and this being we call God.

*Reply to Objection 1:* As Augustine says (*Enchiridion xi*): “Since God is the highest good, He would not allow any evil to exist in His works, unless His omnipotence and goodness were such as to bring



good even out of evil.” This is part of the infinite goodness of God, that He should allow evil to exist, and out of it produce good.

*Reply to Objection 2:* Since nature works for a determinate end under the direction of a higher agent, whatever is done by nature must needs be traced back to God, as to its first cause. So also whatever is done voluntarily must also be traced back to some higher cause other than human reason or will, since these can change or fail; for all things that are changeable and capable of defect must be traced back to an immovable and self-necessary first principle, as was shown in the body of the Article.

# OF THE SIMPLICITY OF GOD (EIGHT ARTICLES)

## Whether God is a body?

*Objection 1:* It seems that God is a body. For a body is that which has the three dimensions. But Holy Scripture attributes the three dimensions to God, for it is written: “He is higher than Heaven, and what wilt thou do? He is deeper than Hell, and how wilt thou know? The measure of Him is longer than the earth and broader than the sea” (Job 11:8,9). Therefore God is a body.

*Objection 2:* Further, everything that has figure is a body, since figure is a quality of quantity. But God seems to have figure, for it is written: “Let us make man to our image and likeness” (Gn. 1:26). Now a figure is called an image, according to the text: “Who being the brightness of His glory and the figure,” i.e. the image, “of His substance” (Heb. 1:3). Therefore God is a body.

*Objection 3:* Further, whatever has corporeal parts is a body. Now Scripture attributes corporeal parts to God. “Hast thou an arm like God?” (Job 40:4); and “The eyes of the Lord are upon the just” (Ps. 33:16); and “The right hand of the Lord hath wrought strength” (Ps. 117:16). Therefore God is a body.

*Objection 4:* Further, posture belongs only to bodies. But something which supposes posture is said of God in the Scriptures: “I saw the Lord sitting” (Is. 6:1), and “He standeth up to judge” (Is. 3:13). Therefore God is a body.

*Objection 5:* Further, only bodies or things corporeal can be a local term “wherfrom” or “whereto.” But in the Scriptures God is spoken of as a local term “whereto,” according to the words, “Come ye to Him and be enlightened” (Ps. 33:6), and as a term “wherfrom”: “All they that depart from Thee shall be written in the earth” (Jer. 17:13). Therefore God is a body.

*On the contrary,* It is written in the Gospel of St. John (Jn. 4:24): “God is a spirit.”

*I answer that,* It is absolutely true that God is not a body; and this can be shown in three ways. First, because no body is in motion unless it be put in motion, as is evident from induction. Now it has been already proved ([3]Q[2], A[3]), that God is the First Mover, and is Himself unmoved. Therefore it is clear that God is not a body. Secondly, because the first being must of necessity be in act, and in no way in potentiality. For although in any single thing that passes from potentiality to actuality, the potentiality is prior in time to the actuality; nevertheless, absolutely speaking, actuality is prior to potentiality; for whatever is in potentiality can be reduced into actuality only by some

being in actuality. Now it has been already proved that God is the First Being. It is therefore impossible that in God there should be any potentiality. But every body is in potentiality because the continuous, as such, is divisible to infinity; it is therefore impossible that God should be a body. Thirdly, because God is the most noble of beings. Now it is impossible for a body to be the most noble of beings; for a body must be either animate or inanimate; and an animate body is manifestly nobler than any inanimate body. But an animate body is not animate precisely as body; otherwise all bodies would be animate. Therefore its animation depends upon some other thing, as our body depends for its animation on the soul. Hence that by which a body becomes animated must be nobler than the body. Therefore it is impossible that God should be a body.

*Reply to Objection 1:* As we have said above ([4]Q[1], A[9]), Holy Writ puts before us spiritual and divine things under the comparison of corporeal things. Hence, when it attributes to God the three dimensions under the comparison of corporeal quantity, it implies His virtual quantity; thus, by depth, it signifies His power of knowing hidden things; by height, the transcendence of His excelling power; by length, the duration of His existence; by breadth, His act of love for all. Or, as says Dionysius (Div. Nom. ix), by the depth of God is meant the incomprehensibility of His

essence; by length, the procession of His all-pervading power; by breadth, His overspreading all things, inasmuch as all things lie under His protection.

*Reply to Objection 2:* Man is said to be after the image of God, not as regards his body, but as regards that whereby he excels other animals. Hence, when it is said, “Let us make man to our image and likeness,” it is added, “And let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea” (Gn. 1:26). Now man excels all animals by his reason and intelligence; hence it is according to his intelligence and reason, which are incorporeal, that man is said to be according to the image of God.

*Reply to Objection 3:* Corporeal parts are attributed to God in Scripture on account of His actions, and this is owing to a certain parallel. For instance the act of the eye is to see; hence the eye attributed to God signifies His power of seeing intellectually, not sensibly; and so on with the other parts.

*Reply to Objection 4:* Whatever pertains to posture, also, is only attributed to God by some sort of parallel. He is spoken of as sitting, on account of His unchangeableness and dominion; and as standing, on account of His power of overcoming whatever withstands Him.

*Reply to Objection 5:* We draw near to God by no corporeal steps, since He is everywhere, but by the affections of our soul, and by the actions of that same soul do we withdraw from Him; thus, to draw near to or

to withdraw signifies merely spiritual actions based on the metaphor of local motion.

### **Whether God is composed of matter and form?**

*Objection 1:* It seems that God is composed of matter and form. For whatever has a soul is composed of matter and form; since the soul is the form of the body. But Scripture attributes a soul to God; for it is mentioned in Hebrews (Heb. 10:38), where God says: “But My just man liveth by faith; but if he withdraw himself, he shall not please My soul.” Therefore God is composed of matter and form.

*Objection 2:* Further, anger, joy and the like are passions of the composite. But these are attributed to God in Scripture: “The Lord was exceeding angry with His people” (Ps. 105:40). Therefore God is composed of matter and form.

*Objection 3:* Further, matter is the principle of individualization. But God seems to be individual, for He cannot be predicated of many. Therefore He is composed of matter and form.

*On the contrary,* Whatever is composed of matter and form is a body; for dimensive quantity is the first property of matter. But God is not a body as proved in the preceding Article; therefore He is not composed of matter and form.

*I answer that,* It is impossible that matter should

exist in God. First, because matter is in potentiality. But we have shown ([5]Q[2], A[3]) that God is pure act, without any potentiality. Hence it is impossible that God should be composed of matter and form. Secondly, because everything composed of matter and form owes its perfection and goodness to its form; therefore its goodness is participated, inasmuch as matter participates the form. Now the first good and the best-viz. God-is not a participated good, because the essential good is prior to the participated good. Hence it is impossible that God should be composed of matter and form. Thirdly, because every agent acts by its form; hence the manner in which it has its form is the manner in which it is an agent. Therefore whatever is primarily and essentially an agent must be primarily and essentially form. Now God is the first agent, since He is the first efficient cause. He is therefore of His essence a form; and not composed of matter and form.

*Reply to Objection 1:* A soul is attributed to God because His acts resemble the acts of a soul; for, that we will anything, is due to our soul. Hence what is pleasing to His will is said to be pleasing to His soul.

*Reply to Objection 2:* Anger and the like are attributed to God on account of a similitude of effect. Thus, because to punish is properly the act of an angry man, God's punishment is metaphorically spoken of as His anger.

*Reply to Objection 3:* Forms which can be

received in matter are individualized by matter, which cannot be in another as in a subject since it is the first underlying subject; although form of itself, unless something else prevents it, can be received by many. But that form which cannot be received in matter, but is self-subsisting, is individualized precisely because it cannot be received in a subject; and such a form is God. Hence it does not follow that matter exists in God.

### **Whether God is the same as His essence or nature?**

*Objection 1:* It seems that God is not the same as His essence or nature. For nothing can be in itself. But the substance or nature of God-i.e. the Godhead-is said to be in God. Therefore it seems that God is not the same as His essence or nature.

*Objection 2:* Further, the effect is assimilated to its cause; for every agent produces its like. But in created things the “suppositum” is not identical with its nature; for a man is not the same as his humanity. Therefore God is not the same as His Godhead.

*On the contrary,* It is said of God that He is life itself, and not only that He is a living thing: “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (Jn. 14:6). Now the relation between Godhead and God is the same as the relation between life and a living thing. Therefore God is His very Godhead.

*I answer that,* God is the same as His essence or



nature. To understand this, it must be noted that in things composed of matter and form, the nature or essence must differ from the “suppositum,” because the essence or nature connotes only what is included in the definition of the species; as, humanity connotes all that is included in the definition of man, for it is by this that man is man, and it is this that humanity signifies, that, namely, whereby man is man. Now individual matter, with all the individualizing accidents, is not included in the definition of the species. For this particular flesh, these bones, this blackness or whiteness, etc., are not included in the definition of a man. Therefore this flesh, these bones, and the accidental qualities distinguishing this particular matter, are not included in humanity; and yet they are included in the thing which is man. Hence the thing which is a man has something more in it than has humanity. Consequently humanity and a man are not wholly identical; but humanity is taken to mean the formal part of a man, because the principles whereby a thing is defined are regarded as the formal constituent in regard to the individualizing matter. On the other hand, in things not composed of matter and form, in which individualization is not due to individual matter—that is to say, to “this” matter—the very forms being individualized of themselves—it is necessary the forms themselves should be subsisting “supposita.” Therefore “suppositum” and nature in them are identified. Since God then is not composed of matter

and form, He must be His own Godhead, His own Life, and whatever else is thus predicated of Him.

*Reply to Objection 1:* We can speak of simple things only as though they were like the composite things from which we derive our knowledge. Therefore in speaking of God, we use concrete nouns to signify His subsistence, because with us only those things subsist which are composite; and we use abstract nouns to signify His simplicity. In saying therefore that Godhead, or life, or the like are in God, we indicate the composite way in which our intellect understands, but not that there is any composition in God.

*Reply to Objection 2:* The effects of God do not imitate Him perfectly, but only as far as they are able; and the imitation is here defective, precisely because what is simple and one, can only be represented by divers things; consequently, composition is accidental to them, and therefore, in them “suppositum” is not the same as nature.

## **Whether essence and existence are the same in God?**

*Objection 1:* It seems that essence and existence are not the same in God. For if it be so, then the divine being has nothing added to it. Now being to which no addition is made is universal being which is predicated of all things. Therefore it follows that God is being in general which can be predicated of everything. But this

is false: “For men gave the incommunicable name to stones and wood” (Wis. 14:21). Therefore God's existence is not His essence.

*Objection 2:* Further, we can know “whether” God exists as said above ([6]Q[2], A[2]); but we cannot know “what” He is. Therefore God's existence is not the same as His essence—that is, as His quiddity or nature.

*On the contrary,* Hilary says (Trin. vii): “In God existence is not an accidental quality, but subsisting truth.” Therefore what subsists in God is His existence.

*I answer that,* God is not only His own essence, as shown in the preceding article, but also His own existence. This may be shown in several ways. First, whatever a thing has besides its essence must be caused either by the constituent principles of that essence (like a property that necessarily accompanies the species—as the faculty of laughing is proper to a man—and is caused by the constituent principles of the species), or by some exterior agent—as heat is caused in water by fire. Therefore, if the existence of a thing differs from its essence, this existence must be caused either by some exterior agent or by its essential principles. Now it is impossible for a thing's existence to be caused by its essential constituent principles, for nothing can be the sufficient cause of its own existence, if its existence is caused. Therefore that thing, whose existence differs from its essence, must have its existence caused by

another. But this cannot be true of God; because we call God the first efficient cause. Therefore it is impossible that in God His existence should differ from His essence. Secondly, existence is that which makes every form or nature actual; for goodness and humanity are spoken of as actual, only because they are spoken of as existing. Therefore existence must be compared to essence, if the latter is a distinct reality, as actuality to potentiality. Therefore, since in God there is no potentiality, as shown above [7](A[1]), it follows that in Him essence does not differ from existence. Therefore His essence is His existence. Thirdly, because, just as that which has fire, but is not itself fire, is on fire by participation; so that which has existence but is not existence, is a being by participation. But God is His own essence, as shown above [8](A[3]) if, therefore, He is not His own existence He will be not essential, but participated being. He will not therefore be the first being-which is absurd. Therefore God is His own existence, and not merely His own essence.

*Reply to Objection 1:* A thing that has nothing added to it can be of two kinds. Either its essence precludes any addition; thus, for example, it is of the essence of an irrational animal to be without reason. Or we may understand a thing to have nothing added to it, inasmuch as its essence does not require that anything should be added to it; thus the genus animal is without reason, because it is not of the essence of animal in

general to have reason; but neither is it to lack reason. And so the divine being has nothing added to it in the first sense; whereas universal being has nothing added to it in the second sense.

*Reply to Objection 2:* “To be” can mean either of two things. It may mean the act of essence, or it may mean the composition of a proposition effected by the mind in joining a predicate to a subject. Taking “to be” in the first sense, we cannot understand God's existence nor His essence; but only in the second sense. We know that this proposition which we form about God when we say “God is,” is true; and this we know from His effects ([9]Q[2], A[2]).

### **Whether God is contained in a genus?**

*Objection 1:* It seems that God is contained in a genus. For a substance is a being that subsists of itself. But this is especially true of God. Therefore God is in a genus of substance.

*Objection 2:* Further, nothing can be measured save by something of its own genus; as length is measured by length and numbers by number. But God is the measure of all substances, as the Commentator shows (Metaph. x). Therefore God is in the genus of substance.

*On the contrary,* In the mind, genus is prior to what it contains. But nothing is prior to God either

really or mentally. Therefore God is not in any genus.

*I answer that,* A thing can be in a genus in two ways; either absolutely and properly, as a species contained under a genus; or as being reducible to it, as principles and privations. For example, a point and unity are reduced to the genus of quantity, as its principles; while blindness and all other privations are reduced to the genus of habit. But in neither way is God in a genus. That He cannot be a species of any genus may be shown in three ways. First, because a species is constituted of genus and difference. Now that from which the difference constituting the species is derived, is always related to that from which the genus is derived, as actuality is related to potentiality. For animal is derived from sensitive nature, by concretion as it were, for that is animal, which has a sensitive nature. Rational being, on the other hand, is derived from intellectual nature, because that is rational, which has an intellectual nature, and intelligence is compared to sense, as actuality is to potentiality. The same argument holds good in other things. Hence since in God actuality is not added to potentiality, it is impossible that He should be in any genus as a species. Secondly, since the existence of God is His essence, if God were in any genus, He would be the genus "being," because, since genus is predicated as an essential it refers to the essence of a thing. But the Philosopher has shown (Metaph. iii) that being cannot

be a genus, for every genus has differences distinct from its generic essence. Now no difference can exist distinct from being; for non-being cannot be a difference. It follows then that God is not in a genus. Thirdly, because all in one genus agree in the quiddity or essence of the genus which is predicated of them as an essential, but they differ in their existence. For the existence of man and of horse is not the same; as also of this man and that man: thus in every member of a genus, existence and quiddity-i.e. essence-must differ. But in God they do not differ, as shown in the preceding article. Therefore it is plain that God is not in a genus as if He were a species. From this it is also plain that He has no genus nor difference, nor can there be any definition of Him; nor, save through His effects, a demonstration of Him: for a definition is from genus and difference; and the mean of a demonstration is a definition. That God is not in a genus, as reducible to it as its principle, is clear from this, that a principle reducible to any genus does not extend beyond that genus; as, a point is the principle of continuous quantity alone; and unity, of discontinuous quantity. But God is the principle of all being. Therefore He is not contained in any genus as its principle.

*Reply to Objection 1:* The word substance signifies not only what exists of itself-for existence cannot of itself be a genus, as shown in the body of the article; but, it also signifies an essence that has the

property of existing in this way-namely, of existing of itself; this existence, however, is not its essence. Thus it is clear that God is not in the genus of substance.

*Reply to Objection 2:* This objection turns upon proportionate measure which must be homogeneous with what is measured. Now, God is not a measure proportionate to anything. Still, He is called the measure of all things, in the sense that everything has being only according as it resembles Him.

### **Whether in God there are any accidents?**

*Objection 1:* It seems that there are accidents in God. For substance cannot be an accident, as Aristotle says (Phys. i). Therefore that which is an accident in one, cannot, in another, be a substance. Thus it is proved that heat cannot be the substantial form of fire, because it is an accident in other things. But wisdom, virtue, and the like, which are accidents in us, are attributes of God. Therefore in God there are accidents.

*Objection 2:* Further, in every genus there is a first principle. But there are many “genera” of accidents. If, therefore, the primal members of these genera are not in God, there will be many primal beings other than God-which is absurd.

*On the contrary,* Every accident is in a subject. But God cannot be a subject, for “no simple form can be a subject,” as Boethius says (De Trin.). Therefore in



God there cannot be any accident.

*I answer that,* From all we have said, it is clear there can be no accident in God. First, because a subject is compared to its accidents as potentiality to actuality; for a subject is in some sense made actual by its accidents. But there can be no potentiality in God, as was shown ([10]Q[2], A[3]). Secondly, because God is His own existence; and as Boethius says (Hebdom.), although every essence may have something superadded to it, this cannot apply to absolute being: thus a heated substance can have something extraneous to heat added to it, as whiteness, nevertheless absolute heat can have nothing else than heat. Thirdly, because what is essential is prior to what is accidental. Whence as God is absolute primal being, there can be in Him nothing accidental. Neither can He have any essential accidents (as the capability of laughing is an essential accident of man), because such accidents are caused by the constituent principles of the subject. Now there can be nothing caused in God, since He is the first cause. Hence it follows that there is no accident in God.

*Reply to Objection 1:* Virtue and wisdom are not predicated of God and of us univocally. Hence it does not follow that there are accidents in God as there are in us.

*Reply to Objection 2:* Since substance is prior to its accidents, the principles of accidents are reducible to the principles of the substance as to that which is prior;

although God is not first as if contained in the genus of substance; yet He is first in respect to all being, outside of every genus.

### **Whether God is altogether simple?**

*Objection 1:* It seems that God is not altogether simple. For whatever is from God must imitate Him. Thus from the first being are all beings; and from the first good is all good. But in the things which God has made, nothing is altogether simple. Therefore neither is God altogether simple.

*Objection 2:* Further, whatever is best must be attributed to God. But with us that which is composite is better than that which is simple; thus, chemical compounds are better than simple elements, and animals than the parts that compose them. Therefore it cannot be said that God is altogether simple.

*On the contrary,* Augustine says (De Trin. iv, 6,7): “God is truly and absolutely simple.”

*I answer that,* The absolute simplicity of God may be shown in many ways. First, from the previous articles of this question. For there is neither composition of quantitative parts in God, since He is not a body; nor composition of matter and form; nor does His nature differ from His “suppositum”; nor His essence from His existence; neither is there in Him composition of genus and difference, nor of subject and

accident. Therefore, it is clear that God is nowise composite, but is altogether simple. Secondly, because every composite is posterior to its component parts, and is dependent on them; but God is the first being, as shown above ([11]Q[2], A[3]). Thirdly, because every composite has a cause, for things in themselves different cannot unite unless something causes them to unite. But God is uncaused, as shown above ([12]Q[2], A[3]), since He is the first efficient cause. Fourthly, because in every composite there must be potentiality and actuality; but this does not apply to God; for either one of the parts actuates another, or at least all the parts are potential to the whole. Fifthly, because nothing composite can be predicated of any single one of its parts. And this is evident in a whole made up of dissimilar parts; for no part of a man is a man, nor any of the parts of the foot, a foot. But in wholes made up of similar parts, although something which is predicated of the whole may be predicated of a part (as a part of the air is air, and a part of water, water), nevertheless certain things are predicable of the whole which cannot be predicated of any of the parts; for instance, if the whole volume of water is two cubits, no part of it can be two cubits. Thus in every composite there is something which is not it itself. But, even if this could be said of whatever has a form, viz. that it has something which is not it itself, as in a white object there is something which does not belong to the essence

of white; nevertheless in the form itself, there is nothing besides itself. And so, since God is absolute form, or rather absolute being, He can be in no way composite. Hilary implies this argument, when he says (De Trin. vii): “God, Who is strength, is not made up of things that are weak; nor is He Who is light, composed of things that are dim.”

*Reply to Objection 1:* Whatever is from God imitates Him, as caused things imitate the first cause. But it is of the essence of a thing to be in some sort composite; because at least its existence differs from its essence, as will be shown hereafter, ([13]Q[4], A[3]).

*Reply to Objection 2:* With us composite things are better than simple things, because the perfections of created goodness cannot be found in one simple thing, but in many things. But the perfection of divine goodness is found in one simple thing ([14]Q[4], A[1] and [15]Q[6], A[2]).

## **Whether God enters into the composition of other things?**

*Objection 1:* It seems that God enters into the composition of other things, for Dionysius says (Coel. Hier. iv): “The being of all things is that which is above being—the Godhead.” But the being of all things enters into the composition of everything. Therefore God enters into the composition of other things.

*Objection 2:* Further, God is a form; for Augustine says (De Verb. Dom., [\*Serm. xxxviii]) that, “the word of God, which is God, is an uncreated form.” But a form is part of a compound. Therefore God is part of some compound.

*Objection 3:* Further, whatever things exist, in no way differing from each other, are the same. But God and primary matter exist, and in no way differ from each other. Therefore they are absolutely the same. But primary matter enters into the composition things. Therefore also does God. Proof of the minor-whatever things differ, they differ by some differences, and therefore must be composite. But God and primary matter are altogether simple. Therefore they nowise differ from each other.

*On the contrary,* Dionysius says (Div. Nom. ii): “There can be no touching Him,” i.e. God, “nor any other union with Him by mingling part with part.”

Further, the first cause rules all things without commingling with them, as the Philosopher says (De Causis).

*I answer that,* On this point there have been three errors. Some have affirmed that God is the world-soul, as is clear from Augustine (De Civ. Dei vii, 6). This is practically the same as the opinion of those who assert that God is the soul of the highest heaven. Again, others have said that God is the formal principle of all things; and this was the theory of the Almaricians. The third

error is that of David of Dinant, who most absurdly taught that God was primary matter. Now all these contain manifest untruth; since it is not possible for God to enter into the composition of anything, either as a formal or a material principle. First, because God is the first efficient cause. Now the efficient cause is not identical numerically with the form of the thing caused, but only specifically: for man begets man. But primary matter can be neither numerically nor specifically identical with an efficient cause; for the former is merely potential, while the latter is actual. Secondly, because, since God is the first efficient cause, to act belongs to Him primarily and essentially. But that which enters into composition with anything does not act primarily and essentially, but rather the composite so acts; for the hand does not act, but the man by his hand; and, fire warms by its heat. Hence God cannot be part of a compound. Thirdly, because no part of a compound can be absolutely primal among beings-not even matter, nor form, though they are the primal parts of every compound. For matter is merely potential; and potentiality is absolutely posterior to actuality, as is clear from the foregoing ([16]Q[3], A[1]): while a form which is part of a compound is a participated form; and as that which participates is posterior to that which is essential, so likewise is that which is participated; as fire in ignited objects is posterior to fire that is essentially such. Now it has been proved that God is

absolutely primal being ([17]Q[2], A[3]).

*Reply to Objection 1:* The Godhead is called the being of all things, as their efficient and exemplar cause, but not as being their essence.

*Reply to Objection 2:* The Word is an exemplar form; but not a form that is part of a compound.

*Reply to Objection 3:* Simple things do not differ by added differences-for this is the property of compounds. Thus man and horse differ by their differences, rational and irrational; which differences, however, do not differ from each other by other differences. Hence, to be quite accurate, it is better to say that they are, not different, but diverse. Hence, according to the Philosopher (Metaph. x), “things which are diverse are absolutely distinct, but things which are different differ by something.” Therefore, strictly speaking, primary matter and God do not differ, but are by their very being, diverse. Hence it does not follow they are the same.

## **THE PERFECTION OF GOD (THREE ARTICLES)**

### **Whether God is perfect?**

*Objection 1:* It seems that perfection does not belong to God. For we say a thing is perfect if it is

completely made. But it does not befit God to be made. Therefore He is not perfect.

*Objection 2:* Further, God is the first beginning of things. But the beginnings of things seem to be imperfect, as seed is the beginning of animal and vegetable life. Therefore God is imperfect.

*Objection 3:* Further, as shown above ([18]Q[3], A[4]), God's essence is existence. But existence seems most imperfect, since it is most universal and receptive of all modification. Therefore God is imperfect.

*On the contrary,* It is written: "Be you perfect as also your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mat. 5:48).

*I answer that,* As the Philosopher relates (Metaph. xii), some ancient philosophers, namely, the Pythagoreans and Leucippus, did not predicate "best" and "most perfect" of the first principle. The reason was that the ancient philosophers considered only a material principle; and a material principle is most imperfect. For since matter as such is merely potential, the first material principle must be simply potential, and thus most imperfect. Now God is the first principle, not material, but in the order of efficient cause, which must be most perfect. For just as matter, as such, is merely potential, an agent, as such, is in the state of actuality. Hence, the first active principle must needs be most actual, and therefore most perfect; for a thing is perfect in proportion to its state of actuality, because we call that perfect which lacks nothing of the mode of its



perfection.

*Reply to Objection 1:* As Gregory says (Moral. v, 26,29): “Though our lips can only stammer, we yet chant the high things of God.” For that which is not made is improperly called perfect. Nevertheless because created things are then called perfect, when from potentiality they are brought into actuality, this word “perfect” signifies whatever is not wanting in actuality, whether this be by way of perfection or not.

*Reply to Objection 2:* The material principle which with us is found to be imperfect, cannot be absolutely primal; but must be preceded by something perfect. For seed, though it be the principle of animal life reproduced through seed, has previous to it, the animal or plant from which it came. Because, previous to that which is potential, must be that which is actual; since a potential being can only be reduced into act by some being already actual.

*Reply to Objection 3:* Existence is the most perfect of all things, for it is compared to all things as that by which they are made actual; for nothing has actuality except so far as it exists. Hence existence is that which actuates all things, even their forms. Therefore it is not compared to other things as the receiver is to the received; but rather as the received to the receiver. When therefore I speak of the existence of man, or horse, or anything else, existence is considered a formal principle, and as something received; and not

as that which exists.

## **Whether the perfections of all things are in God?**

*Objection 1:* It seems that the perfections of all things are not in God. For God is simple, as shown above ([19]Q[3], A[7]); whereas the perfections of things are many and diverse. Therefore the perfections of all things are not in God.

*Objection 2:* Further, opposites cannot coexist. Now the perfections of things are opposed to each other, for each thing is perfected by its specific difference. But the differences by which “genera” are divided, and “species” constituted, are opposed to each other. Therefore because opposites cannot coexist in the same subject, it seems that the perfections of all things are not in God.

*Objection 3:* Further, a living thing is more perfect than what merely exists; and an intelligent thing than what merely lives. Therefore life is more perfect than existence; and knowledge than life. But the essence of God is existence itself. Therefore He has not the perfections of life, and knowledge, and other similar perfections.

*On the contrary,* Dionysius says (Div. Nom. v) that “God in His one existence prepossesses all things.”

*I answer that,* All created perfections are in God. Hence He is spoken of as universally perfect, because

He lacks not (says the Commentator, *Metaph.* v) any excellence which may be found in any genus. This may be seen from two considerations. First, because whatever perfection exists in an effect must be found in the effective cause: either in the same formality, if it is a univocal agent-as when man reproduces man; or in a more eminent degree, if it is an equivocal agent-thus in the sun is the likeness of whatever is generated by the sun's power. Now it is plain that the effect pre-exists virtually in the efficient cause: and although to pre-exist in the potentiality of a material cause is to pre-exist in a more imperfect way, since matter as such is imperfect, and an agent as such is perfect; still to pre-exist virtually in the efficient cause is to pre-exist not in a more imperfect, but in a more perfect way. Since therefore God is the first effective cause of things, the perfections of all things must pre-exist in God in a more eminent way. Dionysius implies the same line of argument by saying of God (*Div. Nom.* v): "It is not that He is this and not that, but that He is all, as the cause of all." Secondly, from what has been already proved, God is existence itself, of itself subsistent ([20]Q[3], A[4]). Consequently, He must contain within Himself the whole perfection of being. For it is clear that if some hot thing has not the whole perfection of heat, this is because heat is not participated in its full perfection; but if this heat were self-subsisting, nothing of the virtue of heat would be wanting to it. Since

therefore God is subsisting being itself, nothing of the perfection of being can be wanting to Him. Now all created perfections are included in the perfection of being; for things are perfect, precisely so far as they have being after some fashion. It follows therefore that the perfection of no one thing is wanting to God. This line of argument, too, is implied by Dionysius (Div. Nom. v), when he says that, "God exists not in any single mode, but embraces all being within Himself, absolutely, without limitation, uniformly;" and afterwards he adds that, "He is the very existence to subsisting things."

*Reply to Objection 1:* Even as the sun (as Dionysius remarks, (Div. Nom. v)), while remaining one and shining uniformly, contains within itself first and uniformly the substances of sensible things, and many and diverse qualities; "a fortiori" should all things in a kind of natural unity pre-exist in the cause of all things; and thus things diverse and in themselves opposed to each other, pre-exist in God as one, without injury to His simplicity. This suffices for the Reply to the Second Objection.

*Reply to Objection 3:* The same Dionysius says (Div. Nom. v) that, although existence is more perfect than life, and life than wisdom, if they are considered as distinguished in idea; nevertheless, a living thing is more perfect than what merely exists, because living things also exist and intelligent things both exist and

live. Although therefore existence does not include life and wisdom, because that which participates in existence need not participate in every mode of existence; nevertheless God's existence includes in itself life and wisdom, because nothing of the perfection of being can be wanting to Him who is subsisting being itself.

### **Whether any creature can be like God?**

*Objection 1:* It seems that no creature can be like God. For it is written (Ps. 85:8): "There is none among the gods like unto Thee, O Lord." But of all creatures the most excellent are those which are called participation gods. Therefore still less can other creatures be said to be like God.

*Objection 2:* Further, likeness implies comparison. But there can be no comparison between things in a different "genus." Therefore neither can there be any likeness. Thus we do not say that sweetness is like whiteness. But no creature is in the same "genus" as God: since God is no "genus," as shown above ([21]Q[3], A[5]). Therefore no creature is like God.

*Objection 3:* Further, we speak of those things as like which agree in form. But nothing can agree with God in form; for, save in God alone, essence and existence differ. Therefore no creature can be like to

God.

*Objection 4:* Further, among like things there is mutual likeness; for like is like to like. If therefore any creature is like God, God will be like some creature, which is against what is said by Isaias: “To whom have you likened God?” (Is. 40:18).

*On the contrary,* It is written: “Let us make man to our image and likeness” (Gn. 1:26), and: “When He shall appear we shall be like to Him” (1 Jn. 3:2).

*I answer that,* Since likeness is based upon agreement or communication in form, it varies according to the many modes of communication in form. Some things are said to be like, which communicate in the same form according to the same formality, and according to the same mode; and these are said to be not merely like, but equal in their likeness; as two things equally white are said to be alike in whiteness; and this is the most perfect likeness. In another way, we speak of things as alike which communicate in form according to the same formality, though not according to the same measure, but according to more or less, as something less white is said to be like another thing more white; and this is imperfect likeness. In a third way some things are said to be alike which communicate in the same form, but not according to the same formality; as we see in non-univocal agents. For since every agent reproduces itself so far as it is an agent, and everything acts

according to the manner of its form, the effect must in some way resemble the form of the agent. If therefore the agent is contained in the same species as its effect, there will be a likeness in form between that which makes and that which is made, according to the same formality of the species; as man reproduces man. If, however, the agent and its effect are not contained in the same species, there will be a likeness, but not according to the formality of the same species; as things generated by the sun's heat may be in some sort spoken of as like the sun, not as though they received the form of the sun in its specific likeness, but in its generic likeness. Therefore if there is an agent not contained in any "genus," its effect will still more distantly reproduce the form of the agent, not, that is, so as to participate in the likeness of the agent's form according to the same specific or generic formality, but only according to some sort of analogy; as existence is common to all. In this way all created things, so far as they are beings, are like God as the first and universal principle of all being.

*Reply to Objection 1:* As Dionysius says (Div. Nom. ix), when Holy Writ declares that nothing is like God, it does not mean to deny all likeness to Him. For, "the same things can be like and unlike to God: like, according as they imitate Him, as far as He, Who is not perfectly imitable, can be imitated; unlike according as they fall short of their cause," not merely in intensity

and remission, as that which is less white falls short of that which is more white; but because they are not in agreement, specifically or generically.

*Reply to Objection 2:* God is not related to creatures as though belonging to a different “genus,” but as transcending every “genus,” and as the principle of all “genera.”

*Reply to Objection 3:* Likeness of creatures to God is not affirmed on account of agreement in form according to the formality of the same genus or species, but solely according to analogy, inasmuch as God is essential being, whereas other things are beings by participation.

*Reply to Objection 4:* Although it may be admitted that creatures are in some sort like God, it must nowise be admitted that God is like creatures; because, as Dionysius says (Div. Nom. ix): “A mutual likeness may be found between things of the same order, but not between a cause and that which is caused.” For, we say that a statue is like a man, but not conversely; so also a creature can be spoken of as in some sort like God; but not that God is like a creature.