

BLACKFRIARS

SUPPLEMENT

ON THE MANIFESTATION OF THE DIVINE KNOWLEDGE.

BY

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BEING A TRANSLATION OF QUESTION II OF THE

. *Expositio super Boetium De Trinitate.*

Concerning the making manifest of Divine Knowledge, four questions are asked:—

1. Whether it is right to investigate into Divine Things. P. i.
2. Whether there can be any science concerning those Divine Things which are accepted by faith. P. v.
3. Whether, in the science of faith which is concerning God, it is right to use philosophical reasoning. P. x.
4. Whether Divine Things are to be veiled in novel and obscure words. P. xv.

ARTICLE I.

WHETHER IT IS RIGHT TO INVESTIGATE INTO DIVINE THINGS.

It seems that it is not right to investigate into Divine Things by means of rational argument, for:

1. It is said in the 3rd chapter of Ecclesiasticus (v. 22), *Seek not the things that are too high for thee, and search not into things above thine ability.* But Divine Things are, more than anything else, too high for man; and most especially those Divine mysteries which are received by faith. Therefore it is not lawful to search into such things.

2. Punishment is not inflicted except for some fault. But in the 25th chapter of Proverbs (vv. 16, 27) it is said, *As it is not good for a man to eat much honey [lest being gluttoned he vomit it up], so he that is a searcher of Majesty shall be overwhelmed by its radiance.* Therefore to attempt to penetrate into (*perscrutari*) what belongs to Divine Majesty is a fault, and wrong.

3. Ambrose says, "Away with argument if you seek for faith." But in Divine Things faith is needed. Therefore in these matters there is no room for argument in the inquiry into truth.

4. Ambrose again, speaking of the Generation of the Word from the Father, says, "It is not lawful to scrutinise these high mysteries; it is lawful to know *that* the Son is begotten, it is unlawful to discuss *how* He is begotten." For the same reason, therefore, it seems unlawful to argue about anything whatsoever in connection with the Divine Trinity.

5. Gregory also, in a certain Eastertide homily, said "Faith

has no merit where human reason supplies tests." But it is bad to deprive faith of its meritoriousness. Therefore it is unlawful to scrutinise what belongs to faith by means of reasoning.

6. Complete reverence is due to God. But secrets are to be revered by keeping silence concerning them. Hence Denys speaks at the end of his book *On the Heavenly Hierarchy* about our showing our reverence for the sacred mysteries by our silence. With this agrees what is said in Psalm 64, according to Jerome's text, *Praise is silent before Thee, O God*; that is to say, "Silence itself is fitting praise of Thee, O God." Therefore we ought rather to be silent before Divine Things than to scrutinise them.

7. Nobody can be moved to infinity, as Aristotle says in Book I of *On the Heaven and the Earth*, because every movement is for the attaining of a destination, and there can be no destination in infinity. But God is infinitely distant from us. Rational scrutiny, however, is a certain movement of our reason to that which is scrutinised. Therefore it seems that we ought not to try to search closely into Divine Things.

¶ *BUT*, on the other hand, is what is said in I Peter iii (v. 15): *Being always ready to satisfy everyone that asketh of you the reason of that which is in you by (faith and) hope*. But this cannot be accomplished unless by rational means we examine those things which belong to faith. Therefore rational inquiry and argument concerning what belongs to faith is necessary.

Also, as is said in the 1st chapter to Titus (v. 9), that it belongs to a bishop to be *able to exhort in sound doctrine and to convince the gainsayers*. But this cannot be done except by rational arguments. Therefore it is necessary to use rational arguments in matters of faith.

Also, Augustine says in Chapter I of his *On the Trinity*, "With the help of our Lord God, we shall also employ that *reasoning*, which [our adversaries] demand of us, to show that the Trinity is the One God." Therefore man can employ his reasonings in inquiring even into the Trinity.

Also, in his work *Against Felician*, Augustine says: "[Although in matters of faith, it is easier to believe qualified testimony than to investigate by reasoning, nevertheless] (1) because you not altogether unfittingly recognise both of these, since you do not omit to acknowledge testimony as well as the said reasoning. I am ready to proceed with you in this controversy on lines you have approved," i.e. by employing both reasoning and the testimony of authorities. Therefore the same conclusion follows.

¶ *I REPLY* that it is to be said that:

Since the perfection of man consists in his union with God, it is required that a man should in every possible way cling to, and be led towards (2), Divine Things; and that with everything that

is in him. In this manner his intellectual vision will be employed in the contemplation of Divine Things, and similarly his reasoning powers will be employed in rational inquiry into Divine Things; in accordance with what is said in Psalm 72: *It is good for me to cling to God*. Therefore even Aristotle, in the Tenth Book of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, rejects the opinion of those who maintained that man ought not to concern himself with Divine Things, but only with human things. "For," says he, "we must not give ear to those who bid man mind only man's affairs, or mortals only mortal things; but, so far as we can, we should make ourselves like the Immortals, and do all with a view to living in accordance with the highest and Divine Principle which is in us."

Nevertheless it is possible for man in so doing to err, and in three several ways:

Firstly, he may sin by *presumption*. He may, that is to say, seek to inquire into Divine Things in such a manner that he seeks thereby fully to grasp them. Such presumption is mocked in the 11th chapter of Job: *Peradventure thou wilt comprehend the footsteps of God, and wilt find out the Almighty perfectly!* And of this also Hilary speaks: "Do not plunge yourself into this secret and dark ocean of inconceivable origin; lest you sink and drown, by presuming you can grasp the Supreme Intelligence. Rather, understand that these things cannot be fully grasped."

Secondly, he may sin because in matters of faith he makes reason to precede faith, instead of faith to precede reason; as he would were he to will to believe only what can be found by reason. It should, in fact, be the other way round [i.e. faith, in theology, should precede reasoning] (3); hence Hilary commands us: "Holding fast to faith: inquire, investigate, persevere."

Thirdly, by carrying his investigations into Divine Things beyond the measure of his capabilities; whence it is said in Romans xii (3) *I say to you not to be more wise than it behoveth to be wise, but to be wise unto sobriety, and according as God hath divided to everyone the measure of faith*. For not all have obtained in equal measure, whence what is beyond the capacity of one is not beyond the capacity of another.

¶ *To the 1st objection* therefore it is to be said that: Those things are here said to be higher than man that exceed his capacity, not those which are by nature of more value than he. For the more a man occupies himself with things that are of more worth than himself, provided it be within the limits of his measure, the more he will be benefitted. But should he exceed the measure of his capacity he will easily fall into error, even should it be in regard to the most insignificant objects. Hence

the Gloss on this very text (of Ecclesiasticus) says: "Heretics are made in two ways: they fall into error and depart from the truth because they aim too far, either when they concern themselves with the Creator, or when they concern themselves with creatures, in a way that exceeds their particular measure.

To the 2nd: to "penetrate into" (*perscrutari*) is, as it were, to search thoroughly to the very end. This is certainly unlawful and presumptuous if it means that one should try to search so thoroughly into Divine Things as to grasp ⁽⁴⁾ them completely [leaving nothing unsearched.]

To the 3rd: It is true that where faith is sought those arguments are to be taken away which are opposed to faith, and also those which attempt to precede faith; but not those which follow upon faith in due measure.

To the 4th: It is indeed not lawful while we are in this world so to scrutinise divine mysteries that it is our intention to grasp them completely. [But this does not mean that we may not know about them at all.] This appears from what follows, when Ambrose says, "It is lawful to know *that* He is begotten," etc. A man would be said to discuss the *how* of the Generation of the Son if he sought to know *what* that Generation is in itself. But concerning Divine Things we cannot know *what* they are, but what they are *not*. ⁽⁵⁾

To the 5th: Human reasoning may take two forms [demonstrative or conclusive and inducing or inconclusive] ⁽⁶⁾. Demonstrative reasoning compels the mind to assent [to its conclusions], and this kind of reasoning has no place in matters of faith. Nevertheless, demonstrative reasoning can refute what is destructive of faith, or that which asserts the impossible. For although matters of faith cannot be demonstratively proved, neither can they be demonstratively disproved. And if such a line of reasoning, claiming to prove a truth of faith, were introduced, certainly the meritoriousness of faith would be destroyed; for in that case assent would not come from the will, but would be forced by logic. But a merely "inducing" argument, drawn from certain analogies with truths of faith, does not destroy the essence of faith; for it does not make the truths of faith apparent, since a merely "inducing" argument does not reduce its conclusions to those self-evident principles which are [directly] seen by the mind. So such "inducing" reasoning does not deprive faith of its meritoriousness, since it does not compel the assent of the intellect—the assent remains voluntary.

To the 6th: God is indeed revered by silence. But this does not mean that we may say nothing whatever about Him, nor inquire into Him; but that we should understand that [however

much we say or inquire], we fall short of fully grasping Him. Therefore are we bidden in Ecclesiasticus [iii, 32, 33]: *Glorify the Lord as much as ever you can; for he will yet far exceed, and his magnificence is wonderful. Blessing the Lord, exalt him as much as you can: for he is above all praise.*

To the 7th: Since God infinitely transcends all creatures, no creature can be moved towards God in such wise as to be equal to Him, whether in what it receives from Him, or in knowing Him. Because the creature is infinitely distant from Him, it follows, indeed, that He Himself is not the terminus of any creaturely movement. Yet, nevertheless, each creature [in its every movement] is moved in order that it may become more and more like Him, in so far as each is able. So also should the human mind be moved to know more and more about God, in its own particular way. Hence Hilary says: "He who devoutly pursues the Infinite, although he never attains to it, nevertheless progresses by going on."

ARTICLE II.

WHETHER THERE CAN BE ANY SCIENCE CONCERNING THOSE DIVINE THINGS WHICH ARE MATTERS OF FAITH.

It seems that there can be no Science concerning those Divine Things which are matters of faith, for:

1. Science is different from Wisdom. But knowledge of Divine Things is called Wisdom. Therefore it is not Science.

2. As is said in the First Book of the *Posterior Analytics* of Aristotle, every science must presuppose knowledge of what its subject is. But, as John Damascene says, we cannot possibly know what God is. Therefore there can be no Science about God.

3. It belongs to any science to study the component parts of its subject, and what that subject undergoes (7). But God, being pure and immaterial Actuality (8), neither has component parts, which could be analysed, nor can He undergo anything from anything else. Therefore there can be no science about God.

4. In any science, reasoning precedes assent [to conclusions attained by reasoning]. For it is the demonstrative force of logical processes in the various sciences which leads the mind to assent to what is knowable by them. But in matters of faith it is the other way round: the assent given by faith precedes any reasoning about that to which we assent, as has already been said. Therefore, concerning Divine Things, especially those which are assented to by faith, there can be no science.

5. Every science must be based upon premises which are certain; and these premises must either be self-evident, and of such sort that we acknowledge their truth so soon as they are

presented to us, or whose trustworthiness is guaranteed by [their following logically from] such self-evident principles. But articles of faith, which must be the premises of [any alleged science concerning matters of] faith, are neither the one nor the other. For neither are they self-evident, nor can their trustworthiness be established by logical demonstration from such self-evident principles. Therefore there can be no science concerning such Divine Things as are matters of faith.

6. Faith is concerned with things which appear not ⁽⁹⁾. But science is concerned with things which appear, because science itself renders apparent the things with which it deals. Therefore there can be no science concerning such Divine Things as are held by faith.

7. Every science begins with some direct intellectual perception ⁽¹⁰⁾, because it is from the intellectual perception of self-evident premisses that we are brought to the knowledge of conclusions drawn from them. But in matters of faith, there is no intellectual perception at the beginning; rather does it come at the end, as is said by Isaias (vii, 9), *If you will not believe, you shall not understand* ⁽¹¹⁾. Therefore there can be no science concerning those Divine Things which are held by Faith.

¶ *BUT*, on the other hand, is what Augustine says in his Twelfth Book *On the Trinity*, "To this *science* I assign only what generates, defends and strengthens the one saving faith that leads to true bliss." Therefore, there is a science concerning matters of faith.

Also, it is written in the 10th chapter of the Book of Wisdom, *She gave to him the science of the holy ones*. This must mean a science concerning matters of faith, for it is unintelligible unless it refers to a science concerning things which distinguishes holy people from the wicked.

Also, the Apostle, speaking of the knowledge possessed by believers, says (I Cor., viii, 7) *There is not science* ⁽¹²⁾ *in every-one*; from this the same conclusion follows.

¶ *I REPLY* that it is to be said that:

The idea of a Science consists essentially in this: that things hitherto more unknown are made known from things already known. Now this may come about also in regard to Divine Things; whence it follows that concerning Divine Things a Science is possible.

But the knowableness (*notitia*) of the Divine can be assessed in two ways. In one way, from *our* standpoint [i.e. relatively to our purely human means of knowing]. In this sense, nothing is knowable to us except in so far as knowledge concerning it can be derived from those creatures which are made knowable to us

through sense-perception. In the other way, a thing is said to be knowable because it is knowable absolutely and in itself. In this sense, i.e. in themselves, Divine Things are supremely knowable. Even though they are not thus knowable to us, yet they are so known by God Himself, and also by the Blessed in their several degrees.

So, correspondingly, there are two kinds of Science concerning Divine Things. The first is conditioned by our own human method of apprehension; objects of the senses are taken as principles from which Divine Things are made known to us. It was in this way that the philosophers engaged in a science concerning Divine Things, and in fact called the First Philosophy [i.e. Metaphysics] the Divine Science. (13)

The other kind is commensurable with the Divine Things themselves, in such wise that these very Divine Things are perceived in their own intrinsic knowableness. Such perception, in its perfection, is indeed impossible for us in this life; yet even in this life there may be a certain partial sharing in, and likeness to, God's own knowledge of Himself. This is brought about in us in so far as, by means of the gift of faith which God implants in us, we cling to the First Truth Himself, and for Himself alone. And as God, in the very fact that He beholds Himself beholds all other things as well in *His* way (namely, by an immediate vision without any reasoning process); so may we, from the things we accept by faith in our clinging to the First Truth, come to the knowledge of other things in *our* way (namely by drawing conclusions from principles). Thus it comes about that what we first of all hold in faith becomes, as it were, the principles or premisses in this Science, and what we derive therefrom become, as it were, conclusions. From this it is clear that this second kind of Science is higher than that "Divine Science" of which the philosophers treated, because it is based upon higher principles.

¶ *To the 1st argument*, therefore, it should be said that: Wisdom is not different from Science in the sense that the two are mutually exclusive; but because the idea of "Wisdom" adds something to the idea of "Science". For Wisdom, as Aristotle says in the Sixth Book of his *Ethics*, is the chief of all the sciences, because, being concerned with the highest and most universal principles, it directs all other sciences [since it is concerned with the ultimate premisses which they all must presuppose]. For this reason it is also called the Goddess of Sciences (14) in the First Book of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. If the science which is concerned with the Highest is therefore rightly called Wisdom, how much more so is that Science to be called Wisdom

which is not only *about* the Highest, but which comes *from* the Highest! Now, since it belongs to the wise to direct and give order to the rest, so this highest of sciences, which directs and orders the others, is truly called Wisdom; just as in the art of mechanical construction, the man who plans the whole is credited with a certain "Wisdom"; leaving the word "Science" as a sufficient designation for his underlings. Following this usage of the words, Science is distinguished from Wisdom as the river from the source. ⁽¹⁵⁾

To the 2nd: As has been said elsewhere ⁽¹⁶⁾, when causes are inferred from their effects, knowledge of the effect takes the place of knowledge of the nature of the cause; and such knowledge is all that is required in those sciences whose subjects are not directly apprehensible to us. Hence it is not necessary that, in order that we may have a Science of Divine Things, it must be known in advance what God is. Or it may be said that, the very fact that we do know what God is not, takes the place in this Divine Science which is occupied in other sciences by knowledge of what their subject is. For as things other than God are distinguished from one another by our knowing *what* each is; so God is distinguished by us from other things by the very fact that we know of Him what He is *not*. ⁽¹⁷⁾

To the 3rd: By the "parts" of the subject in any science are to be understood, not only those components of which it is made or which contribute to its completion, but also anything whatsoever whose knowledge is required for knowing of that subject; for all such things are treated of in a science in so far as they are related to the subject [and so to knowledge about it]. Similarly, what a subject "undergoes" covers anything whatsoever that can be proved concerning it, including mere negations regarding it, or assertions regarding the relationships of other things to it. And in fact many such things can be demonstrated concerning God, whether one proceeds from premisses which are naturally knowable, or from principles imparted in faith.

To the 4th: In any science there are both premisses and conclusions. The reasoning process itself precedes assent to the conclusions, but presupposes assent to the premisses which are its starting-point. But in this Divine Science, articles of faith occupy the place of premisses, not of conclusions. Even so, these premisses themselves can be defended against attempts to disprove them, in a similar fashion to that employed by Aristotle in the Fourth Book of *Metaphysics* in his dispute with those who seek to deny the first principles of reason; for the truth of these can be made more clear by certain analogies drawn by induction, although they cannot be demonstratively proved.

To the 5th: Even in some sciences which are imparted by purely human means, certain premisses are employed which are not known to everybody, but which must nevertheless be presupposed as established by a higher science; thus, in some of the more specialised sciences, premisses are presupposed and acknowledged which are provided by less specialised sciences, and these in their turn are not established except in a higher and more general science. And this is the relationship of articles of faith, which are its premisses, to this Science for knowing about God; for though they are not established or self-evident in *our* Science, they are nevertheless self-evident in that Science which God has of Himself. They are therefore presupposed to our Science, and they are assented to by us in His disclosure of them to us through His accredited witnesses; in much the same way as a physician might accept the testimony of a physcist in regard to the number of the elements. (18)

To the 6th: The "apparentness" of conclusions depends on the "apparentness" of the premisses from which they are drawn. Hence a science which does not proceed from "apparent" principles will not reach "apparent" conclusions. And such is the Science of which we now speak; for it does not make matters of faith to appear, but *from* matters of faith it does make certain conclusions to appear in the manner in which there is certitude regarding their premisses.

To the 7th: Direct intellectual perception is indeed the *first* beginning of every science; nevertheless it is not always from this that it *immediately* takes its rise. Indeed, as has been said, the *immediate* starting-point of a science may often be trustful assent to the findings of a higher science, as has already been said of subordinate sciences; their conclusions, that is to say, come immediately from a kind of faith in those things which are presupposed as established by a higher science. However, their *ultimate* principles are to be found in the understanding of him who understands the higher science; for this man has certain understanding of [and not merely faith concerning] the particular creatures which are the object of his study. In similar fashion, the *immediate* principle of this Divine Science is faith, but the *first* principle of it is God's own Understanding, in which we have faith. Faith, indeed, is given to us in order that we may come to understand that which we believe. It is as if the student of a lower science [were not content to accept his premisses merely on faith, but] were to learn the higher science; for then, what he had previously only believed, would now become to him known and understood.

ARTICLE III.

WHETHER IN THE SCIENCE CONCERNING GOD, WHICH IS BASED ON FAITH, IT IS RIGHT TO USE REASONING DERIVED FROM NATURE (19)
(AND PHILOSOPHY).

It seems that, in matters of faith, it is not right to use reasoning derived from nature, because,

1. In I Corinthians i (17) it is written, *For Christ sent me not to baptise, but to preach the Gospel, not in wisdom of speech . . .* The Gloss interprets "wisdom of speech" to mean "the doctrine of Philosophers." And on the words in I Cor. i, (20), *Where is the disputer of this world?* the Gloss says: "Such a disputer is one who unravels the secrets of nature; such as these are not accepted by God as preachers." And concerning I Cor. xi (4), *My speech and my preaching was not in the persuasive words of human wisdom*, the Gloss says: "Although the Apostle's words were persuasive, it was not because of their human wisdom, as were the words of false apostles." From all of which it appears that one should not use reasoning derived from nature in dealing with matters of faith.

2. Commenting on Isaias xv (1), *Because in the night Ar is laid waste*, the Gloss says that "Ar means adversary, that is to say worldly wisdom, which is an enemy to God."

3. Ambrose says: "The inmost secret of faith is free from 'natural' arguments." (20) Wherefore, where one is concerned with faith, it is wrong to use the reasonings and sayings of philosophers.

4. Jerome tells, in his letter to Eustochius, of how in a vision he was scourged by Divine judgment because he had read the books of Cicero, how the bystanders prayed that pardon might be granted to his youth, how he would henceforward be led out to be crucified if he should ever again read heathen books, and how, calling God to witness, he cried, "If ever I shall possess worldly books, if ever I shall read them, I have denied Thee." If therefore, it is wrong even to study from them, it is much worse to use them in treating of Divine Things.

5. Worldly wisdom is often represented in Scripture by water; the Divine Wisdom, on the other hand, is represented by wine. But Isaias censures those innkeepers who mix water with their wine (i, 22). Therefore those teachers are to be censured who mix "natural" texts with Sacred Scripture.

6. Jerome says in his Gloss on Osee ii, that "we ought not to use even the same words as heretics." But heretics use arguments derived from nature in order to dissolve the faith, as is said in the Gloss on Proverbs vii and Isaias xv. Therefore Catholics ought not to use them in their treatises.

7. Every science has its own particular principles. So also the Sacred Teaching has its particular principles, which are articles of faith. But in any other science one would follow an incorrect method if one were to use the principles of some other science; for each science should proceed only from its own proper principles, as Aristotle says in the First Book of the *Posterior Analytics*. Therefore such a method would be wrong likewise in the Sacred Teaching.

8. If the teaching of some author is to be rejected in some particular point, his authority will be invalidated as a support for some other point. For this reason Augustine says that, if in the Sacred Teaching [itself] we should find one point which is false, its whole authority as a support to faith would be destroyed. But the Sacred Teaching repudiates the doctrines of the philosophers on many points, because it is often found that they had erred. Therefore their authority is ineffective to support anything [in the Sacred Teaching].

¶ *BUT*, on the other hand: The Apostle in the Epistle to Titus, i (12) makes use of a line of the poet Epimenides, *The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slothful bellies*. Also in I Cor., xv (33) he uses the words of Menander, *Evil communications corrupt good manners*. And in Acts xvii (28) he uses words of Aratus, *For we also are his offspring*. Therefore it is right also for other teachers of the Divine Scripture to use "natural" arguments.

Again, Jerome, in his letter to Magnus (an orator at Rome), after mentioning several teachers of Scripture such as Basil and Gregory, adds, "All these so filled their books with the teachings and opinions of philosophers, that one does not know which to admire more, their secular learning or their knowledge of the Scriptures." They would not have done so had it been unlawful or useless.

Again, Jerome, in his letter to Pamachius on the death of Paula, wrote: "If you love a captive woman, that is, worldly wisdom, and if no beauty but hers attracts you, make her bald and cut off her alluring hair, that is to say, the graces of style, and pare away her dead nails. Wash her with the nitre of which the prophet speaks, and then lie with her and say, *Her left hand is under my head, and her right hand doth embrace me*. Then shall the captive bring to you many children; from a Moabitess she shall become an Israelitish woman." (21) Therefore the use of worldly wisdom may be fertile.

Also, Augustine, in the Second Book *On the Trinity* says, "I shall not be sluggish to seek knowledge of God, either through the Scripture or through the creature." But knowledge of God

through the creature is set forth in philosophy. Therefore it is not unfitting that one should use philosophical reasoning in the Sacred Teaching.

Again, Augustine, in the Second Book *On Christian Doctrine*, "If the philosophers have said things which are true and in agreement with our faith, not only are they not to be feared, but what they is to be taken from them for our own use, as from unlawful possessors."

Also, commenting on Daniel i (8), *Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not be defiled with the king's table*, the Gloss says, "If someone inexpert in mathematics should write against mathematicians, or inexpert at philosophy should attack philosophers, who, even though himself a laughing-stock, would not roar with laughing at such a laughing-stock?" (22) But all teachers of sacred Scripture have to go into action against philosophers. Therefore they have to make use of philosophy.

¶ *I REPLY* that it is to be said that:

The gifts of grace are added to nature in such a way that they do not destroy it, but rather bring it to its perfection. Hence the light of faith, implanted in us freely by grace, does not destroy the natural light of knowledge which is inborn in us. For although the natural light of the human mind is insufficient to make manifest what is made manifest by faith, nevertheless it is impossible that what is delivered to us by God in faith should be contrary to those things which are inborn in us by nature. Otherwise, either one or the other would be false; and since God is the Author of both faith and nature, God would be the Author of falseness to us—which is impossible. Rather, then, since there is to be found among less perfect things (albeit imperfectly) a certain imitation of, or approximation to, more perfect things, there is to be found among the things known by natural reason certain analogies and parallels to these things which are delivered to us through faith.

Now, as the Sacred Teaching [as has been said] is founded upon [truths made manifest by] the light of faith, so philosophy is founded upon [truths made manifest by] the natural light of reason; hence it is impossible that the things which belong to philosophy should be contrary to the things that belong to faith—though they fall short of them. Rather do the former include certain analogies and parallels with the latter; and also certain preludes (*præambula*) to them, corresponding to the way in which nature itself is a prelude to grace. So, if anything is found in the sayings of philosophers which is contrary to faith, it cannot really belong to philosophy, but will rather be an abuse of philosophy arising from defective reasoning. Therefore it is pos-

sible (23) from the principles of philosophy itself to refute errors of this kind, either by showing that they are intrinsically impossible or by showing that they are not necessary [i.e. that such conclusions do not follow demonstratively and decisively from certain principles]. For as matters of faith cannot be demonstratively proved, so certain things which are contrary to them cannot be demonstratively disproved; but it can be shown that they are not necessary.

So therefore, in the Sacred Teaching, we can use philosophy in three ways:

Firstly, by proving demonstratively those truths which are preludes to faith, and which in the *science* of faith are required. Such are those things which can be proved concerning God by natural reasoning, e.g. that there is a God, that He is one, and suchlike. Also such things as can be proved in philosophy concerning creatures and which faith presupposes.

Secondly, by illustrating matters of faith by means of analogies and parallels. In this way Augustine, in his *De Trinitate*, makes use of many analogies drawn from philosophical teachings in order to throw light on [the mystery of] the Trinity.

Thirdly, for withstanding things said which are contrary to faith; either by showing them to be untrue, or by showing that they are not necessarily conclusive.

Nevertheless, those who use philosophy in connection with [what is taught in] the Sacred Writings, may err in two ways. In one way by employing what is contrary to faith, and which does not belong to real philosophy but is rather an abuse of it and erroneous—this is what Origen did. In the other way, by trying to confine things of faith within the boundaries of philosophy, as would happen should somebody decide to believe nothing but what could be established by philosophy. It should really be the other way round, by bringing philosophy into the boundaries of faith; as the Apostle says: *Bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ* (II Cor. x, 5).

¶ *To the 1st objection*, therefore, it is to be said that: From all these quotations it is shown, indeed, that the teachings of philosophers are not to be used as something primary, in such a way that on their account are to be held [the things that are to be believed] by faith; but this does not mean that teachers of the Sacred Doctrine may not use them as something secondary. Hence, expounding the words *I will destroy the wisdom of the wise*, the Gloss says: "This does not mean that understanding of the truth is something which can be condemned by God; what is condemned is the wisdom of those who trust in their own learning." In order that all that belongs to faith should not be attri-

buted to human power or wisdom, but to God alone, it was the will of God that the primitive Apostolic preaching should be in weakness and simplicity; nevertheless, the power and secular wisdom that have followed in its train have shown, by the triumph of the faith, that both as to power and to wisdom, the world is subject to God.

To the 2nd: Worldly wisdom is said to be opposed to God in regard to its abuse (as when heretics abuse it), not in regard to the truth that is in it.

To the 3rd: The mystery of faith is said to be free from philosophical dogmas, because it is not confined within the boundaries of philosophy.

To the 4th: Jerome was so attached to certain heathen books that he came to hold the Holy Scriptures in contempt; as he himself says, "If when I came to myself I began to read the prophets, I was disgusted by their uncouth style." Nobody questions but that *that* was blameworthy.

To the 5th: No logical argument should be drawn from figurative or metaphorical expressions, as Peter Lombard says in VI Dist. i, of his *Sentences*. And Denys says, in his letter to Titus, that Symbolic Theology is not probative, especially when it is not interpreting some author. Nevertheless, it can be said that when one of two components is changed into the nature of the other, the result of their fusion is not accounted a "mixture," but only when the natures of both of them are changed. So, when those who use philosophical texts in [the study of what is contained in] Sacred Scripture, bringing them into the obedience of faith, they do not mix water with wine, but rather turn water into wine. (24)

To the 6th: Jerome is here talking of those reasonings which are found by heretics to the advantage of their errors; but real philosophical teachings are not of this nature . . . (25) and are not, therefore, on that account to be avoided.

To the 7th: Inter-related sciences are such that one science can employ the principles of another. Later sciences always employ the principles of earlier ones, whether those earlier ones be higher or lower in importance. Thus metaphysics, which is the highest of all [attainable by human reason alone], makes use of what is proved in lower sciences. Similarly, theology, to which all other sciences are, as it were, servants, and preludes in the historical order of their appearance, even though they are lower in worth and importance, can use the principles of all the rest.

To the 8th: To the extent that the Sacred Teaching uses "natural" texts in its own interest, it does not accept them on

the authority of their authors, but on account of the sound reasoning of what is said by them. Hence, what is well said it receives; the rest it rejects. But when it uses them to refute some error, then it uses them because they are accepted as authorities by their opponents; for the testimony of an opponent is more effective.

ARTICLE IV.

WHETHER DIVINE THINGS OUGHT TO BE VEILED IN NOVEL (26) AND
OBSCURE WORDS.

It seems that Divine Things ought not to be wrapped up in an obscurity of words, because,

1. It is said in Proverbs xiv (6): *The learning of the wise is easy.* Therefore it ought to be set forth without obscure words.

2. It is said in Ecclesiasticus iv (28): *Hide not thy vision in her beauty,* and in Proverbs xi (26): *He that hideth up corn shall be cursed among the people.* The Gloss understands this "corn" to be that of preaching. Therefore the words of the Sacred Teaching should not be hidden.

3. It is said in Matthew x (27): *That which I tell you in the dark, speak ye in the light.* The Gloss understands "in the dark" to mean "in mystery," and "in the light" to mean "openly." Therefore the dark things of faith ought rather to be openly displayed than kept hidden by difficult language.

4. Teachers of the faith have obligations both to the wise and to the unwise, as appears from Romans i (14). Therefore they ought to talk in such a way that they can be understood both by the great and by the simple; therefore, without obscure language.

5. It is said in Wisdom vii (13), concerning the Divine Wisdom: *Which I have learned without pretentiousness, and impart to others without envy, and her riches I hide not.* But he who keeps something hidden does not impart it to others. Therefore it seems that they are retaining it out of envy or jealousy.

6. Augustine says in Book IV *On the Christian Doctrine* (c. 10): "The exponents of the Holy Scriptures ought not to express themselves in the same way [as the Scriptures themselves], as if putting themselves forward to be in their turn expounded as of the same authority; but they should, first and foremost, in all their utterances, make every effort, by using all the clearness of speech at their command, to have themselves understood, so that he will be a very dull man indeed who does not understand them." (27)

¶ *BUT*, on the other hand,

It is said in Matthew vii (6): *Give not that which is holy to dogs; neither cast ye your pearls before swine.* On this the Gloss

says, "The more a thing is hidden, the more eagerly is it sought; the more it is kept secret, the more it is revered; the longer it takes to search for it, the more dearly it is prized." But since the Sacred Texts ought to be viewed with the utmost reverence, it seems that they ought to be delivered to others in a dark manner.

Again, Denys, in the first chapter *On the Heavenly Hierarchy*, commands: "Not everything which is to the praise of God shalt thou pass on to all and sundry; of what is over and above the ordinary forms and rites appointed by God (in which, indeed, all mysteries are enfolded), thou shalt not pass on anything except to those who are equal to you" [in degree of understanding of Divine Things]. (28) But if everything were written out in clear language, it would all be clear to everybody. Therefore the hidden things of faith are to be veiled in obscure language.

Also, in Luke viii (10) it is said: *To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God* (which the Gloss interprets to mean "understanding of the Scriptures"), *but to the rest in parables*. Therefore there are some things which should be hidden from the multitude by obscurity of language.

¶ I REPLY that it is to be said that,

The words of a teacher should be so controlled that they really help and do not harm his hearers. Now, there are some things which, when heard, can hurt nobody. Such are all those things which everybody is obliged to know; and such things as these should be hidden from nobody, but set clearly before all. But there are some things which, if they were propounded clearly, would be harmful to some hearers. This might happen in two ways:

In one way, if the hidden things of faith were stripped naked before unbelievers who detest the faith; for they would make of it a matter of mockery and derision.

It is on this account that it is said in Matthew vii (6), *Give not that which is holy to dogs*. And Denys says in the second chapter *On the Heavenly Hierarchy*: "Give ear with holy dispositions to the holy utterances, and when you yourself have become God-like by learning Godly things, hide the holy mysteries of this atoning doctrine in the inmost recesses of your mind, and do not display them before the profane multitude."

In another way, if recondite things were to be set before the immature so that, because they do not correctly understand them, they would make of them an occasion of falling into error. Hence it is said in I. Corinthians iii (1): *I could not speak to you as unto spiritual people, but as unto carnal; as unto little ones in Christ I gave you milk to drink; not meat; for you were*

not able as yet. So, commenting on the words of Exodus xxi (33), *If a man open a pit . . . [and an ox or an ass fall into it]*, the Gloss of Gregory says, "Anyone who perceives the depths in the sacred utterances should hide in silence their sublime meanings when in the presence of those who are incapable of receiving them, lest he put an inner stumbling-block in the way of an immature believer or of an unbeliever who might become a believer. Otherwise he may destroy them. These things, therefore, should be kept hidden from those to whom they might do harm. In private conversation, however, it is possible to discriminate. Certain things can be explained to the wise and mature alone, concerning which one should nevertheless keep silence in public." So also Augustine, in the Fourth Book *On Christian Doctrine*: "There are some things which are not understood in all their proper force, or are only to be understood slightly and with great difficulty, no matter at what length, or with what fullness of eloquence the speaker may expound them; and these should never be brought publicly before the people at all, or only on rare occasions when there is some urgent reason." But in writing it is not possible to use such discrimination, because a written book may fall into the hands of anybody. Therefore, such things, when they are written, should be concealed in a certain obscurity of language, in such a way that they will benefit the wise who will understand them, and will hide them from the simple who are not able to receive them. And this should be no burden to anybody, for those who understand will go on reading them, and those who do not are not obliged to read them at all. So Augustine continues: "Books, however, may be written in such a manner that, if understood, they, so to speak, draw their own readers, and if not understood, give no trouble to those who do not care to read them." Therefore, in order that truths may be brought to the understanding of others, we should not neglect the task of writing them, even though they may be very difficult to understand.

To the 1st objection, therefore, it is to be said that: This text is beside our present point. It is not said that the learning of the wise is easy *actively*, i.e. that they teach in an easy way, but *passively*, i.e. that they are easily taught, as the Gloss says.

To the 2nd: These texts speak of one who hides what he ought to make manifest. Hence the text in Ecclesiasticus is preceded by this, *Refrain not to speak in the day of salvation*. This does not mean that hidden things ought not to be concealed in obscure language.

To the 3rd: The Teaching of Christ is to be publicly and openly

taught, in such a way that to each person is made plain what it is expedient for him to know. But not in such a way that those things should be broadcast indiscriminately which ought not to be known [by everybody].

To the 4th: Teachers of the faith have not obligations to the wise and to the unwise in such a way that they should propound the same things to both; but in such a way that they should give to each what is expedient to them.

To the 5th: It is not from envy or jealousy that subtle things are to be hidden from the multitude, but rather from a due discretion.

To the 6th: Augustine is here speaking of those who speak by word of mouth to the people, not of those who deliver their teaching in writing. This is evident from his next words [quoted above].

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES.

(1) These words of St Augustine are not quoted by St Thomas, but are here added to clarify the quotation. The full force of St Augustine's rather grudging admission of rational argument in his dispute with the Arian Felician can only be appreciated when read in its context as a reply to Felician's demands.

(2) *Innitatur et adducatur*, corresponding to the two modes of knowledge of Divine Things distinguished in the following article.

(3) Words in square brackets are added by the translator in the hope of clarifying the meaning.

(4) *Comprehendere*, literally "to grasp completely in the hand." Technically, St Thomas understands this to mean, "to know a thing in every way in which it is knowable" (cf. *Summa*, I. xii, 7).

(5) St Thomas had proved this at length in the preceding Question (Article 2) of this work, and had shown that (*pace* many of his modern "interpreters") theology is confined to "knowledge *that*" and excludes all "knowledge *what*."

(6) *Demonstrativa . . . Persuasoria*. The first is apodictic in Aristotle's sense, compelling assent and generating certain knowledge. The second is precisely *not* "persuasive" (i.e. convincing) in the English sense; it generates opinion or probability, or merely clarifies what is otherwise known.

(7) *Passiones*, literally "sufferings" or "undergoings". A deliberately elastic word which (as St Thomas shows in his reply) may cover any predicate of the subject, besides that which affects the subject in itself.

(8) *Forma simplex*, the expression of Boethius: any "form" or "act" which is not compounded with matter (therefore, for St Thomas, including angels), but here used of the Absolute Act which is God.

(9) *Fides est de non apparentibus*, cf. Hebrews xi, 1.

(10) *Cuiuslibet scientiæ principium est intellectus* (as distinct from *ratio*).

(11) The Clementine Vulgate has *permanebitis* (Douai, *continue*) where St Thomas reads *intelligetis* (as do also St Augustine and St Anselm).

(12) Vulgate: *scientia*; Douai: *knowledge*; Greek *gnosis*. It will be remarked that this whole Question is concerned with the ancient problem of the relation of *pistis* and *gnosis*.

(13) See Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, 983a 10, and 1026a 24.

(14) *Dea scientiarum*. Presumably St Thomas is relying on a faulty translation of *theia epistemon* in *Metaph.* 983a 5.

(15) *Sicut proprium contra diffinitionem*. The idea seems to be that Wisdom is essential Science (i.e. that expressed by the definition), while the other "sciences" are as "propria" flowing from this source.

(16) In the previous Question of this work; cf. *Summa* I. i. 7 ad 1, ii, 2 ad 2.

(17) St Thomas had explained this at length in the previous Question (*Expos. super Boethium de Trin.* I, art. ii.).

(18) Literally, "As a medical man believes the Natural Philosopher that there are four elements."

(19) *Rationibus physicis*. This title, added by editors, has been constructed from the first sentence in the usual fashion. The expression is unusual, and is presumably borrowed by St Thomas from the quotation from St Ambrose presented in the third objection. St Thomas's own question had been concerning *rationibus philosophicis* (see page i.). The article itself covers the legitimacy of using "physical" or "natural" arguments and reasonings, philosophical arguments and reasonings (which come to the same thing) and also philosophical and even poetical *documenta* or texts.

(20) *Physicis argumentis*.

(21) Adapted from Schaff-Wace translation, in *Nicene Library*.

(22) *Quis etiam ridendus, vel ridendo non rideat?*

(23) The Lethielleux (Mandonnet) edition reads *impossibile*, which is plainly contrary to St Thomas's meaning. Here and in the "ad 6um" one suspects that some marginal comment of a dissentient reader has crept into the text.

(24) A theological conclusion, in the strict sense of the word, is one in which the content of a revealed major proposition is analysed by means of a minor proposition discoverable by natural reason. St Thomas's image of the water changed into wine vividly supports the thesis of Fr Marin Sola, O.P., that the conclusion is therefore homogeneous with the major, and not the minor, premiss. (See his *L'évolution homogène du dogme*.)

(25) Omitting *Immo solum in errorem ducunt* (al. *volentes*). See Note 23.

(26) *Novis*, new, presumably in the sense of novel or unfamiliar. The word does not occur again in the course of the article.

(27) This and succeeding quotations from this work are slightly adapted from Marcus Dods' translation.

(28) Adapted from Darboy's translation.

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