

Thomas Aquinas  
*Summa Theologiae*

Part One

GOD

Question I

The Nature and Domain  
of Sacred Doctrine

(In Ten Articles)

To place our purpose within definite limits, we must first investigate the nature and domain of sacred doctrine. Concerning this there are ten points of inquiry:—

(1) Whether sacred doctrine is necessary? (2) Whether it is a science? (3) Whether it is one or many? (4) Whether it is speculative or practical? (5) How it is compared with other sciences? (6) Whether it is a wisdom? (7) Whether God is its subject-matter? (8) Whether it is argumentative? (9) Whether it rightly employs metaphors and similes? (10) Whether the Sacred Scripture of this doctrine may be expounded in different senses?

First Article

Whether, Besides the Philosophical Sciences,  
Any Further Doctrine Is Required?

We proceed thus to the First Article:—

*Objection 1.* It seems that, besides the philosophical sciences, 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. iii. 22*). But whatever is not above reason is sufficiently considered in the philosophical sciences. Therefore any other knowledge besides the philosophical sciences is superfluous.

*Obj. 2.* Further, knowledge can be concerned only

Reprinted from Aquinas, *Basic Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas*, edited by Anton C. Pegis (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, reprinted 1997), by permission of the publisher.

with being, for nothing can be known, save the true, which is convertible with being. But everything that is, is considered in the philosophical sciences—even God Himself; so that there is a part of philosophy called theology, or the divine science, as is clear from Aristotle. Therefore, besides the philosophical sciences, there is no need of any further knowledge.

*On the contrary,* It is written (2 *Tim. iii. 16*): *All Scripture inspired of God is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice.* Now Scripture, inspired by God, is not a part of the philosophical sciences discovered by human reason. Therefore it is useful that besides the philosophical sciences there should be another science—*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 the philosophical sciences investigated by human reason. First, 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* (*Isa. lxiv. 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 can investigate, it was necessary that man be taught by a divine revelation. For the truth about God, such as reason can know it, 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 be taught divine truths by divine revelation. It was therefore necessary that, besides the philosophical sciences investigated by reason, there should be a sacred science by way of revelation.

*Reply Obj. 1.* Although those things which are beyond man's knowledge may not be sought for by

man through his reason, nevertheless, what is revealed by God must be accepted through faith. Hence the sacred text continues. *For many things are shown to thee above the understanding of man (Ecclus. iii. 25).* And in such things sacred science consists.

*Reply Obj. 2.* Sciences are diversified according to the diverse nature of their knowable objects. For the astronomer and the physicist both 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 are treated by the philosophical sciences, so far as they can be known by the light of natural reason, may not also be treated by another science so far as they are known by the light of the divine revelation. Hence the theology included in sacred doctrine differs in genus from that theology which is part of philosophy.

## Second Article

### Whether Sacred Doctrine Is a Science?

*We proceed thus to the Second Article:—*

*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. iii. 2).* Therefore sacred doctrine is not a science.

*Obj. 2.* Further, science is not of individuals. But sacred doctrine treats of individual facts, such as the deeds of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the like. Therefore sacred doctrine is not a science.

*On the contrary,* Augustine says that *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 principles known by the natural light of the intellect, such as arithmetic and geometry and the like. There are also some which proceed from principles known by the light of a higher science: thus the science of optics 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 made known by the light of a higher science, namely, the science of God and the blessed. Hence, just as music accepts on authority the principles taught by the arithmetician, so sacred science accepts the principles revealed by God.

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

*Reply Obj. 2.* Individual facts are not treated in sacred doctrine because it is concerned with them principally; they are rather introduced as examples to be followed in our lives (as in the moral sciences), as well as 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.

## Third Article

### Whether Sacred Doctrine Is One Science?

*We proceed thus to the Third Article:—*

*Objection 1.* It seems that sacred doctrine is not one science, for according to the Philosopher<sup>1</sup> *that science is one which treats only of one class of subjects.* But the creator and the creature, both of whom are treated in sacred doctrine, cannot be grouped together under one class of subjects. Therefore sacred doctrine is not one science.

*Obj. 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 of holy things (Wis. x. 10).*

*I answer that,* Sacred doctrine is one science. The unity of a power or habit is to be gauged by its object, not indeed, in its material aspect, but as regards the formality under which it is an object. For example, man, ass, stone, agree in the one formality of being colored; and color is the formal object of sight. Therefore, because Sacred Scripture (as we have said) con-

1. [Aquinas often refers to Aristotle as "the Philosopher."—S.M.C.]

siders some things under the formality of being di-  
vinely revealed, all things which have been divinely  
revealed have in common the formality of the object  
of this science. Hence, they are included under sacred  
doctrine as under one science.

*Reply Obj.* 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 Obj.* 2. Nothing prevents inferior powers or  
habits from being diversified by objects which yet  
agree with one another in coming together under a  
higher power or habit; because the higher power or  
habit regards its own object under a more universal  
formality. Thus, the object of the *common sense* is  
the sensible, including, therefore, whatever is visible  
or audible. Hence the *common sense*, although one  
power, extends to all the objects of the five senses.  
Similarly, objects which are the subject-matter of dif-  
ferent philosophical sciences can yet be treated by  
this one single sacred science under one aspect,  
namely, in 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.

**Fourth Article**

**Whether Sacred Doctrine Is  
a Practical Science?**

*We proceed thus to the Fourth Article:—*

*Objection* 1. It seems that sacred doctrine is a prac-  
tical science, for a practical science is that which  
ends in action, according to the Philosopher. But  
sacred doctrine is ordained to action: *Be ye doers of  
the word, and not hearers only* (Jas. i. 22). Therefore  
sacred doctrine is a practical science.

*Obj.* 2. Further sacred doctrine is divided into the  
Old and the New Law. But law belongs to moral  
science, which is a practical science. Therefore sacred  
doctrine is a practical science.

*On the contrary,* Every practical science is con-  
cerned with the things man can do; as moral science  
is concerned with human acts, and architecture with  
buildings. But sacred doctrine is chiefly concerned  
with God, Who is rather the Maker of man. Therefore  
it is not a practical but a speculative science.

*I answer that,* Sacred doctrine, being one, extends  
to things which belong to the different philosophical  
sciences, because it considers in each the same formal  
aspect, namely, so far as they can be known through  
the divine light. Hence, although among the philo-  
sophical sciences some are speculative and others  
practical, nevertheless, sacred doctrine includes both;  
as God, by one and the same science, knows both  
Himself and His works.

Still, it is more speculative than practical, because  
it is more concerned with divine things than with  
human acts; though even of these acts it treats in-  
asmuch as man is ordained by them to the perfect  
knowledge of God, in which consists eternal beat-  
itude.

This is a sufficient answer to the Objections.

**Fifth Article** *Ar. Met. 12:220*

**Whether Sacred Doctrine Is Nobler Than  
Other Sciences?**

*We proceed thus to the Fifth Article:—*

*Objection* 1. It seems that sacred doctrine is not  
nobler than other sciences, for the nobility of a sci-  
ence depends on its certitude. 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.

*Obj.* 2. Further, it is the part of a lower science  
to draw upon a higher; as music draws upon arithme-  
tic. But sacred doctrine does draw upon the philo-  
sophical sciences; for Jerome<sup>2</sup> observes, in his Epistle  
to Magnus, that *the ancient doctors so enriched their  
books with the doctrines and thoughts of the philoso-  
phers, that thou knowest not what more to admire in  
them, their profane erudition or their scriptural learn-  
ing.* Therefore sacred doctrine is inferior to other sci-  
ences.

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

*I answer that,* Since this science is partly speculative  
and partly practical, it transcends all other sciences,

2. [Jerome (c. 347–c. 420), a Father of the Church, was  
the author of the Vulgate translation of the Bible, the official  
Latin version of the Roman Catholic Church.]

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 dignity 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 the divine knowledge, which cannot err; in point of the higher dignity 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 more final end, 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 beatitude, to which as to an ultimate end the ends of all the practical sciences are directed. Hence it is clear that from every standpoint it is nobler than other sciences.

*Reply Obj. 1.* It may well happen that what is in itself the more certain may seem to us the less certain because of the weakness of our intellect, which is dazzled by the clearest objects of nature; as the owl is dazzled by the light of the sun. Hence the fact that some happen to doubt about the articles of faith is not due to the uncertain nature of the truths, but to the weakness of the human intellect; yet the slenderest knowledge that may be obtained of the highest things is more desirable than the most certain knowledge obtained of the lowest things, as is said in *De Animalibus xi*.<sup>3</sup>

*Reply Obj. 2.* This science can draw 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 the other sciences, but immediately from God, by revelation. Therefore it does not draw upon the other sciences as upon its superiors, but uses them as its inferiors and handmaidens: even so the master sciences make use of subordinate sciences, as political science of military science. That it thus uses them is not due to its own defect or insufficiency, but to the defect of our intellect, which is more easily led by what is

3. [The reference is to a biological work by Aristotle.]

known through natural reason (from which proceed the other sciences), to that which is above reason, such as are the teachings of this science.

## Sixth Article

### Whether This Doctrine Is a Wisdom?

*We proceed thus to the Sixth Article:—*

*Objection 1.* It seems that this doctrine is not a 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. But this doctrine borrows its principles. Therefore it is not a wisdom.

*Obj. 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 *Ethics vi*.<sup>4</sup> But this doctrine does not prove the principles of other sciences. Therefore it is not a wisdom.

*Obj. 3.* Further, this doctrine is acquired by study, whereas wisdom is acquired by God's inspiration, and is accordingly numbered among the gifts of the Holy Spirit (*Isa. xi. 2*). Therefore this doctrine is not a wisdom.

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

*I answer that,* This doctrine is wisdom above all human wisdoms not merely in any one order, but absolutely. For since it is the part of a wise man to order and to judge, and since lesser matters can be judged in the light of some higher cause, he is said to be wise in any genus who considers the highest cause in that genus. Thus in the realm of building, he who plans the form of the house is called wise and architect, in relation to the subordinate laborers who trim the wood and make ready the stones: thus it is said, *As a wise architect I have laid the foundation* (*I Cor. ii. 10*). Again, in order of all human life, the prudent man is called wise, inasmuch as he directs his acts to a fitting end: thus it is said, *Wisdom is prudence to a man* (*Prov. x. 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. But sacred doctrine essentially treats of God viewed as the highest cause, for

4. [The reference is to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.]

it treats of Him 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. i. 19)—but also so far as He is known to Himself alone and revealed to others. Hence sacred doctrine is especially called a wisdom.

*Reply Obj. 1.* Sacred doctrine derives its principles, not from any human knowledge, but from the divine knowledge, by which, as by the highest wisdom, all our knowledge is ordered.

*Reply Obj. 2.* The principles of the other sciences either are evident and cannot be proved, or they are proved by natural reason in some other science. But the knowledge proper to this science comes through revelation, and not through natural reason. Therefore it is not its business to prove the principles of the other sciences, but only to judge them. For whatsoever is found in the other sciences contrary to the truth of this science must be condemned as false. Hence, it is said: *Destroying counsels and every height that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God* (2 Cor. x. 4, 5).

*Reply Obj. 3.* Since judgment pertains to wisdom, in accord with a twofold manner of judging there is a twofold wisdom. A man may judge in one way by inclination, as whoever has the habit of a virtue judges rightly of what is virtuous by his very inclination towards it. Hence it is the virtuous man, as we read,<sup>5</sup> who is the measure and rule of human acts. In another way, a man may judge by knowledge, just as a man learned in moral science might be able to judge rightly about virtuous acts, though he had not virtue. The first manner of judging divine things belongs to that wisdom which is numbered as a gift of the Holy Ghost: *The spiritual man judgeth all things* (1 Cor. ii. 15). And Dionysius says: *Hierotheus is taught not only as one learning, but also, as experiencing divine things*. The second manner of judging belongs to this doctrine, inasmuch as it is acquired by study, though its principles are obtained by revelation.

### Seventh Article

#### Whether God Is the Subject-Matter of This Science?

*We proceed thus to the Seventh Article:—*

*Objection 1.* It seems that God is not the subject-matter of this science. For, according to the Philoso-

5. [The reference is to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.]

pher, in every science the essence of its subject is presupposed. But this science cannot presuppose the essence of God, for Damascene says: *It is impossible to express the essence of God*. Therefore God is not the subject-matter of this science.

*Obj. 2.* Further, whatever conclusions are reached in any science must be comprehended under the subject-matter of that science. But in Holy Scripture we reach conclusions not only concerning God, but concerning many other things, such as creatures and human morality. Therefore God is not the subject-matter of this science.

*On the contrary,* The subject-matter of a 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 subject-matter of this science.

*I answer that,* God is the subject-matter of this science. The relation between a science and its subject-matter is the same as that between a habit or a power and its object. Now properly speaking the object of a power or habit is that under whose formality all things are referred to that power or habit, as man and stone are referred to sight in that they are colored. Hence colored things are the proper object of sight. But in sacred doctrine all things are treated under the aspect of God, either because they are God Himself, or because they refer to God as to their beginning and end. Hence it follows that God is in very truth the subject-matter of this science. This is made clear also from the principles of this science, namely, the articles of faith, for faith is about God. The subject-matter 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 in this science, and not to the aspect under which it is treated, have asserted the subject-matter of this science to be something other than God—that is, either things and signs, or the works of salvation, or the whole Christ, that is, the head and members. Of all these things, in truth, we treat in this science, but so far as they are ordered to God.

*Reply Obj. 1.* Although we cannot know in what consists the essence of God, nevertheless in this doctrine we make use of His effects, either of nature or of grace, in the place of a definition, in regard to whatever is treated in this doctrine concerning God;

even as in some philosophical sciences we demonstrate something about a cause from its effect, by taking the effect in the place of a definition of the cause.

*Reply Obj. 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 ordained to Him.

### **Eighth Article**

#### **Whether Sacred Doctrine Is Argumentative?**

*We proceed thus to the Eighth Article:—*

*Objection 1.* It seems this doctrine is not argumentative. For Ambrose<sup>6</sup> says: *Put arguments aside where faith is sought.* But in this doctrine faith especially is sought: *But these things are written that you may believe (Jo. xx. 31).* Therefore sacred doctrine is not argumentative.

*Obj. 2.* Further, if it is argumentative, the argument is either from authority or from reason. If it is from authority, it seems unbefitting its dignity, for the proof from authority is the weakest form of proof according to Boethius.<sup>7</sup> But if from reason, this is unbefitting its end, because, according to Gregory,<sup>8</sup> *faith has no merit in those things of which human reason brings its own experience.* Therefore sacred doctrine is not argumentative.

*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 (Tit. i. 9).*

*I answer that,* As the 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

6. [Ambrose (c. 340–397) was bishop of Milan and a Father of the Church.]

7. [Boethius (c. 480–524) was a Roman philosopher and statesman whose greatest work, the *Consolation of Philosophy*, was written while he was imprisoned prior to his execution on false charges of treason.]

8. [Gregory I (c. 540–604), a Father of the Church who served as pope, defended the view that the temporal powers of the emperor and the spiritual powers of the pope were each supreme within separate spheres.]

on to prove something else; as the Apostle<sup>9</sup> argues from the resurrection of Christ in proof of the general resurrection (*1 Cor. xv. 12*). 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 concedes nothing, it can have no dispute with him, though it can answer his arguments. Hence Sacred Scripture, since it has no science above itself, disputes argumentatively 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 Scripture, 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 argument, 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 proofs brought against faith are not demonstrations, but arguments that can be answered.

*Reply Obj. 1.* Although arguments from human reason cannot avail to prove what belongs to faith, nevertheless, this doctrine argues from articles of faith to other truths.

*Reply Obj. 2.* It is especially proper to this doctrine to argue from authority, inasmuch as its principles are obtained by revelation; and hence we must believe the authority of those to whom the revelation has been made. Nor does this take away 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 also makes use 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 set forth in this doctrine. Since therefore grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it, natural reason should minister to faith as the natural inclination of the will ministers to

9. [Aquinas often refers to Paul as “the Apostle.”]

charity. Hence the Apostle says: *Bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ* (2 Cor. x. 5). Hence it is that 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:<sup>10</sup> *As some also of your own poets said: For we are also His offspring* (Acts xvii. 28). Nevertheless, sacred doctrine makes use of these authorities as extrinsic and probable arguments, but properly uses the authority of the canonical Scriptures as a necessary demonstration, 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: *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 anything in their works to be true, merely because of their having so thought and written, whatever may have been their holiness and learning.*

#### Ninth Article

#### Whether Holy Scripture Should Use Metaphors?

*We proceed thus to the Ninth Article:—*

*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 poetic, the least of all the sciences. Therefore it is not fitting that this science should make use of such similitudes.

*Obj. 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. xxiv. 31). But by such similitudes truth is obscured. Therefore to put forward divine truths under the likeness of corporeal things does not befit this doctrine.

10. [Aratus was a third-century B.C. Greek court poet.]

*Obj. 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 the Scriptures.

*On the contrary,* It is written (Osee xxii. 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 sacred doctrine may use metaphors.

*I answer that,* It is befitting Holy Scripture 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 things, because all our knowledge originates from sense. Hence in Holy Scripture spiritual truths are fittingly taught under the likeness of material things. This is what Dionysius<sup>11</sup> says: *We cannot be enlightened by the divine rays except they be hidden within the covering of many sacred veils.* It is also befitting Holy Scripture, which is proposed to all without distinction of persons—*To the wise and to the unwise I am a debtor* (Rom. i. 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 Obj. 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 Obj. 2.* The ray of divine revelation is not extinguished by the sensible imagery wherewith it is veiled, as Dionysius says; 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 likenesses, but raises them to the knowledge of intelligible 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

11. [Dionysius the Areopagite, who lived during the first century, was traditionally considered the first bishop of Athens.]

useful for the exercise of thoughtful minds, and as a defense against the ridicule of the unbelievers, according to the words, *Give not that which is holy to dogs* (Matt. vii. 6).

*Reply Obj. 3.* As Dionysius says, 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. First, because thereby men's minds are the better freed 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 in the case of those who could think of nothing nobler than bodies. Second, 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. Third, because thereby divine truths are the better hidden from the unworthy.

### Tenth Article

#### Whether in Holy Scripture a Word May Have Several Senses?

*We proceed thus to the Tenth Article:—*

*Objection 1.* It seems that in Holy Scripture 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 Scripture ought to be able to state the truth without any fallacy. Therefore in it there cannot be several senses to a word.

*Obj. 2.* Further, Augustine says that *the Old Testament has a fourfold division: according 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 Scripture according to the four different senses mentioned above.

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

*On the contrary,* Gregory says: *Holy Scripture by the manner of its speech transcends every science, be-*

*cause in one and the same sentence, while it describes a fact, it reveals a mystery.*

*I answer that,* The author of Holy Scripture 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. x. 1) the Old Law is a figure of the New Law, and Dionysius says *the New Law itself is a figure of future glory*. Again, 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 signs 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 Scripture is God, Who by one act comprehends all things by His intellect, it is not unfitting, as Augustine says, if, even according to the literal sense, one word in Holy Scripture should have several senses.

*Reply Obj. 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 signs of other things. Thus in Holy Scripture 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 allegorically, as Augustine says. Nevertheless, nothing of Holy Scripture perishes because of this, since nothing necessary to faith is contained under the spiritual sense which is not elsewhere put forward clearly by the Scripture in its literal sense.

*Reply Obj. 2.* These three—history, etiology, analogy—are grouped under the literal sense. For it is called history, as Augustine expounds, whenever any-



thing 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, because of the hardness of men's hearts (*Matt. xix. 8*); 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<sup>12</sup> includes the anagogical under the allegorical sense, laying down three senses only—the historical, the allegorical and the tropological.

*Reply Obj. 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 Scripture.

## Question II

### The Existence of God

#### (In Three Articles)

Because the chief aim of sacred doctrine is to teach the knowledge of God not only as He is in Himself, but also as He is the beginning of things and their last end, and especially of rational creatures, as is clear from what has been already said, therefore, in our endeavor to expound this science, we shall treat: (1) of God; (2) of the rational creature's movement towards God; (3) of Christ, Who as man is our way to God.

In treating of God there will be a threefold division:—

For we shall consider (1) whatever concerns the divine essence. (2) Whatever concerns the distinctions of Persons. (3) Whatever concerns the procession of creatures from Him.

Concerning the divine essence, we must consider:—

(1) Whether God exists? (2) The manner of His existence, or, rather, what is *not* the manner of His

existence. (3) Whatever concerns His operations—namely, His knowledge, will, power.

Concerning the first, there are three points of inquiry:—

(1) Whether the proposition *God exists* is self-evident? (2) Whether it is demonstrable? (3) Whether God exists?

#### First Article

##### Whether the Existence of God Is Self-Evident?

*We proceed thus to the First Article:—*

*Objection 1.* It seems that the existence of God is self-evident. For those things are said to be self-evident to us the knowledge of which exists naturally in us, as we can see in regard to first principles. But as Damascene<sup>13</sup> says, *the knowledge of God is naturally implanted in all*. Therefore the existence of God is self-evident.

*Obj. 2.* Further, those things are said to be self-evident which are known as soon as the terms are known, which the Philosopher 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 name *God* is understood, it is at once seen that God exists. For by this name 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 name *God* is understood it exists mentally, it also follows that it exists actually. Therefore the proposition *God exists* is self-evident.

*Obj. 3.* Further, the existence of truth is self-evident. For whoever denies the existence of truth that truth does not exist: and, if truth does not exist then the proposition *Truth does not exist* is true. But God is truth itself: *I am the way, the truth, and the life* (*Jo. xiv. 6*). Therefore *God exists* is self-evident.

*On the contrary,* No one can mentally conceive the opposite of what is self-evident, as the Philosopher states concerning the first principles of demonstration. But the opposite of the proposition *God is can*

12. [Hugh of St. Victor (1096–1141), born in Saxony, was a noted theologian who also wrote numerous mystical works.]

13. [John Damascene (c. 675–c. 749) was a Syrian theologian and Father of the Church.]