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APPENDIX

ALEXANDER OF HALES, *THE SUM OF THEOLOGY*¹

(TRANSLATED BY OLEG BYCHKOV)

INTRODUCTION, QUESTION ONE

On the discipline of theology

<...>

Chapter 1. *Is the discipline of theology an [exact] science?*

<...>

1. Augustine, 83 *Questions*, q. 48: “Some things are taken on faith and are never a matter of understanding, for example, every history that deals with singular events and human deeds.” Therefore, since the discipline of theology is for the most part historical, as is clear from the Laws and the Gospel, it is about the things that are “never a matter of understanding.” But there cannot be a science about things that are not a matter of understanding <...>

2. Also, as Aristotle says at the beginning of his *Metaphysics*, “Experience is of singular individual things, art deals with universals <...>”; but the discipline of theology for the most part does not deal with universals, but with singular and individual things, as is clear from historical narratives in it. Therefore it is not art or science.

3. Also, there are three ways truth operates in disciplines: opinion, belief, science <...>. However, science never derives from things pertaining to opinion or belief. Now since theology as such deals with matters of belief <...>, therefore it does not operate as a science.

<...>

[To the contrary]

a. That which is known through divine inspiration is known more truly than that which is known through human reasoning <...>. Therefore, since knowledge in theology

¹ The English text is based on the Quaracchi (1924) edition of the Latin, vol. 1.

is divinely inspired <...> it is a truer science than other sciences.

b. Also, Augustine says in Bk. XIV of *The Trinity*: “theology is a science dealing with things that pertain to our salvation.” Therefore it is a science.

[Solution]

First of all one must note that there could be a science of the cause and a science of the caused. Now the science of the cause of [all] causes is certainly self-sufficient. At the same time, a science of the caused, be they [lower] causes or merely effects, is not self-sufficient, because those things relate to, and depend on, the cause of [all] causes. Hence we conclude that theology, which is a science about God, who is the cause of all causes, is self-sufficient. But the name of ‘science’ [technically speaking] is applied to the sciences of the caused, while the science of the cause of all causes is [actually] called ‘wisdom.’ Whence even Aristotle says that First Philosophy, which is self-sufficient and deals with the cause of all causes, should be called ‘wisdom.’ By the same token, the discipline of theology, which surpasses all other sciences, must be called ‘wisdom.’ <...>

In addition, it must be noted that there is [the sort of] science that perfects our cognition by way of truth, and also there is [the sort of] science that moves our affection towards goodness. The first kind is like cognition through [the faculty of] sight, and therefore should be called science in an absolute sense. The second kind is like cognition by way of taste, and for this reason should be called wisdom,² from the taste of affection <...>.

Therefore, theology, which perfects the soul by way of affection, moving it towards the good through the principles of fear and love, is more appropriately and mainly wisdom. First Philosophy, which is philosophers’ theology³ and deals with the cause of all causes, but perfects our cognition by way of skill and reasoning, is less appropriately called wisdom. As

² A pun lost in the English: ‘wisdom’ (*sapientia*) has the same root in Latin as ‘flavor’ (*sapor*).

³ I.e., part of philosophy that deals with transcendence, or the divine.

for the rest of the sciences, which are about subsequent [levels of] causes and about the effects, they should not be called ‘wisdoms’ but sciences [strictly speaking]. <...>

[To the objections]

1. To the first it must be said that history functions differently in sacred Scripture compared to other disciplines. Indeed, in other disciplines the meaning of historical narratives is “singular and individual deeds” of the people, nor is any inner meaning intended. For this reason, because these historical narratives are about individual and temporal acts, they do indeed deal with those things that are “never a matter of understanding.” However, in sacred Scripture historical narratives are not intended to signify individual acts of humans, but they are supposed to signify universal principles of action and conditions that pertain to instructing the audience and informing the contemplation of the divine mysteries. For example, Abel’s suffering is introduced to signify the passion of Christ and the just, Cain’s malice in order to signify the perversity of the unjust, and so forth. Thus in [the sort of] history that is found in sacred Scripture an individual fact is introduced in order to signify a universal [principle,] and this is where one can speak of understanding and science [in it].

2. To the second it must be said that ‘universal’ can be used in four senses: in predication (example: ‘man’); in exemplifying (example: the shape of an [individual] shoe standing for a number of shoes, or the life of Job standing for the lives of a number of people); in signifying (example: Jacob signifying a just man <...>); in reference to causality (example: God as the universal cause of the creation of things, or Christ as the universal cause of the salvation of humans). Now in view of this one must say that sacred Scripture does contain universals. For sacred Scripture does have general pronouncements, such as “Fear of God is the beginning of wisdom” (Prov. I:7) <...> etc. In such universal pronouncements we have ‘universal’ understood in the first sense, that of predication. It also has particular or individual pronouncements, which appear in historical, prophetic, and other contexts. In these, if one takes their surface meaning, one can find ‘universal’ in the

second sense, i.e., in the sense of exemplifying [something]. For example, literally the stories of Abraham and Job are about individual events, but they are told in Scripture to provide an example of good conduct. <...> As for the inner and spiritual meaning, pronouncements about individual things contain ‘universal’ in the third sense, i.e., universals of signification, for from one universal principle they point to many [individual] things. If one takes both senses of the Scripture, inner and outer, expressed either in general or in individual pronouncements, insofar as they provide some way to God, who is the universal cause of the creation of things, or to Christ, who is the universal cause of the salvation of humans—it contains ‘universal’ in the forth sense, i.e., in the sense of causation. Therefore, having made these distinctions, in this sense one can say that Sacred Doctrine [i.e., theology] is about universal principles.

3. To the third it must be said that, according to Augustine’s distinction in 83 *Questions* [q. 48], “there are three kinds of things pertaining to belief. Some are those that are always taken on faith and are never a matter of understanding, as any historical narrative. Others are believed in the course of understanding them, as all rational arguments, either about numbers or about some disciplines. Others are first believed and then understood: such are things pertaining to the divine that can only be understood by those of pure heart <...>.” From this it appears that there is a category of “things pertaining to belief” that is never associated with science, such as historical [narratives of] deeds. Then there are some [such things] that do go together with science, for example, credibility of arguments of [scholarly] disciplines. Finally, there are some that dispose one towards understanding and science, as is the case with matters pertaining to the divine. Whence, according to an alternative reading⁴ of Is. 7:9, “Unless you believe, you will not understand.” Therefore, it is not mutually repugnant for theology to be both about matters of belief and a science at the same time.

<...>

⁴ I.e., according to the “Itala” version, which was, unlike the Vulgate, a Latin translation from the Septuagint.

Chapter 2. *About the difference between the Sacred Doctrine [i.e., theology] and other sciences.*

<...> It is asked, then: is the discipline of theology simply one of the sciences, or does it contain them, or is contained under them, e.g., under some part of philosophy?

[Objections]

1. Eccl. 1:1: "All wisdom is from Lord God." Therefore, every wisdom or science is theological or divine, because the science of theology is nothing but divine science.

2. Also, theological or divine science is called 'divine' either because it is from God (and then every other science would be 'divine'), or because it is about God: but according to this First Philosophy is [also] divine and theological, because it is about God. And then the [science of] Sacred Scripture will simply be a science like all others, or [at least] like First Philosophy, [i.e., in the same sense of the word].

3. Also, if it is called 'divine' because it is brought forth by the divine Spirit, then one can object as follows. Because "all truth, no matter who might utter it, is from the Holy Spirit,"⁵ <...> therefore, every truth of any whatsoever science is brought forth by the Holy Spirit <...> and every other science will be theological.

4. Also, if [a science] is called 'theological' or 'divine' because it is obtained through divine revelation, one can object as follows, according to Rom. 1:19, where it speaks about the philosophers' knowledge about God: "Whatever is known about God is manifested in them: for God revealed it to them." Therefore, philosophical knowledge about God was obtained through revelation; therefore it is theological.

From these arguments, then, it seems that theology is like one of the other sciences.

[To the contrary]

a. Every human science is acquired through either invention or teaching. However, theology is an inspired, not acquired discipline <...>; therefore, it is not like the other.

⁵ Peter Lombard's gloss on I Cor. 12:3 (*PL* 191, 1651).

b. Also, all human sciences are founded upon evidence coming from creatures, which is the basis for all experience, as Aristotle says in his *Metaphysics* <...>. But theological teaching is based upon evidence coming from faith, according to the alternative reading of Is. 7:9: “Unless you believe, you will not understand.” Therefore it is not like other sciences.

<...>

d. Also, according to Hugh of St. Victor, other sciences are “about the works of creation, which are apparent from the natural state of things, while theology is about the works of restoration,” which become apparent in [the light of] faith: not from the very nature of things, but in the mind of man <...>. Therefore, it is not the same as the other sciences.

<...>

f. Also, all other sciences proceed, according to a rational order, from principles to conclusions, which teach the intellect, not move our affection. However, sacred Scripture proceeds, according to the order of instruction, from practical principles to actions, so that our affection could be moved, by fear and love, on the basis of faith in God’s justice and mercy. <...>

[Solution]

From the above it follows that theology is not like any other science, nor should it be listed among them. Nor is it under any part of philosophy. This is what must be conceded.

[Answer to objections 1-4]

One must reply to the objections in the following manner: the Sacred Doctrine [i.e., theology] is called “divine” or “theological” because it is (1) *from God*, (2) *about God*, and (3) *leading to God*.

“From God.” This is also applicable to other sciences, but not in the same way as it is to sacred Scripture. Indeed, there is the true as true, and the true as good: both variations are from the Holy Spirit. Now when the true is taken as good, this ‘good’ is either ‘moral good’ or ‘good given by grace.’ If we consider ‘good given by grace,’ then there is a connection to the Holy Spirit, who is goodness. In this sense it is from the Holy Spirit according to his own ways: this is why this

doctrine, using the same name, is said to be brought forth by the Holy Spirit. However, in other sciences, i.e., speculative ones, the true is taken as true, and even the good as true. And even if the true is taken as good, as for example in practical moral disciplines, ‘good’ is understood not as given by grace, but as moral: therefore they are not called ‘brought forth by the Holy Spirit.’

‘About God.’ Theology is ‘about God’ not in the same sense as other sciences, e.g., First Philosophy, because they do not treat of God in the context of the mystery of the Trinity or the sacrament of the restoration of humanity.

‘Leading to God.’ It is such through the principles of fear and love based on the faith in God’s mercy and justice: which is not characteristic of any other science.

Chapter 3. *What is the science of sacred Scripture about?*

<...>

[Arguments pro and contra]

Various things are said on this matter. Hugh of St. Victor <...> says: “The subject of sacred Scripture is the works of restoration, while that of the other sciences—the works of creation.”

To the contrary: Gen. 1 deals with the works of creation.

Also, theology is a science about God; therefore, it is a science about the cause of the works of both creation and restoration. Therefore, the subject of sacred Scripture is not the works of restoration, but rather the cause itself, which is God.

2. Also, Peter Lombard in the *Sentences*, following Augustine’s *Christian Doctrine*, says: “the contents of both the New and the Old Testament are focused around things and signs”; therefore, the subject of sacred Scripture is things and signs.

To the contrary: the science about things and the science about signs is not the same science, but sciences are divided into ones that deal with real things and ones that deal with speech, i.e., signification or signs of things. <...>

3. Also, others say that the subject of sacred Scripture is “the whole Christ, both the head and the body, Christ and the Church, the groom and the bride” <...>.

To the contrary: “Christ is the end of the Law” (Rom. 10:4) <...>; therefore, he is not the subject.

[Response]

Subject in sciences is taken in two senses: ‘about which’ and ‘around which.’ The ‘subject about which’ can be taken in three senses, according to the words of Dionysius in his *Angelic Hierarchy*: “All understanding of the divine is divided by the heavenly intelligence into three areas: essence, power, and operation.” According to this, if we take the subject of sacred Scripture in the sense of ‘operation,’ we can say that it is the works of restoration of the humankind. If, however, we take the subject of sacred Scripture in the sense of ‘power,’ we shall say that it is Christ, who is “God’s power and God’s wisdom” (I Cor. 1:24). If, finally, we take the subject of sacred Scripture in the sense of ‘essence,’ we shall say that it is God, or the divine substance. Whence, according to this, theology is a science about the divine substance that must be cognized through Christ in [the course of] the work of restoration.

<...>

Chapter 4. *On the ways of proceeding in [the science of] sacred Scripture.*

Article 1. Is the way of [proceeding in] sacred Scripture that of discipline or science?

[Objections]

1. Any poetic manner is non-scientific and alien to any discipline, because this manner is historical and metaphorical, neither of which is characteristic of a [scientific] discipline. But the theological manner is poetic, historical or parabolic;⁶ therefore it is not scientific.

2. Also, every scientific manner proceeds by way of defining, taking things apart [conceptual analysis], and putting

⁶ I.e., uses parable, which is a kind of metaphor.

them back together [conceptual synthesis]. However, the way of sacred Scripture is not like this; therefore it is not scientific.

3. Also, every scientific manner uses a manifest or direct way of speaking. At the same time, the manner of sacred Scripture uses mystical speech; therefore it is not scientific.

[Reply]

It must be said that the way of sacred Scripture is not that of science in the sense in which human reason takes it. It operates by organizing divine wisdom in order to instruct the soul in those matters that pertain to salvation. <...>

[Answer to objections]

1. To the first one must reply using the words of Dionysius from the *Angelic Hierarchy* <...>. From these words of Dionysius it is clear that the reason why sacred Scripture “very much like an art” operates in a poetic manner is, perhaps, the needs of our own intellect, which lacks comprehension of divine things. The second reason is the dignity of this [sort of] truth, which must be concealed from evil men.

2. To the second one must reply that there are different [scientific] styles: one operates by way of grasping truth through human reason; the other operates by way of [eliciting] the affection of piety through what is divinely inspired.

Now it is the first manner that should operate through defining, taking things apart [analysis], and putting them back together [synthesis]. And this manner is appropriate for human sciences, because it is precisely the grasping of truth by the human reason that is reflected in dividing [concepts,] definitions, and rational arguments.

The second manner must operate by way of precepts, examples, admonitions, revelations, and prayer, because it is these things that are appropriate for [eliciting] the affection of piety. And it is this manner that is characteristic of sacred Scripture. <...>

Also note that the manners of two types of sciences—one that is after shaping our affection along the lines of piety, and the other that is after shaping the intellect alone for the cognition of truth—are different. And the one that is after

shaping our affection proceeds in ways that have just been described <...>.

3. To the third one must say that, just as it is appropriate for human science to use clear speech, so it is appropriate for the divine wisdom to use cryptic speech. For there is wisdom in mystery, according to I Cor. 2:7 <...>. As for the reason for the cryptic nature [of this sort of speech,] it is triple. The first is the merit of faith: for the merit consists [precisely] in believing what you do not see. <...> The second reason is the exercise of perseverance and patience.⁷ <...> The third reason is the dignity of truth, which must be hidden from evil men, as in Matth. 7:6: “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine.”

Article 2. Is the manner of Sacred Scripture one of certitude?

<...> Is the approach of sacred Scripture more certain than in other sciences?

1. Other sciences rely on the intellect, while theology on faith. Since [cognition through] the intellect is more certain than faith, the approach of other sciences is more certain than that of theology.

2. Also, the science that proceeds from the principles that are of themselves clear to the intellect is more certain than the one that proceeds from the principles that are hidden from the intellect. But while other sciences proceed from the principles that are of themselves clear to the intellect, theology is based on the principles that are hidden from the intellect, for they are the principles of faith. Therefore other sciences have a more certain way of proceeding.

3. Also, the science that is based on literal speech is more certain than the one that uses metaphorical speech.

4. Also, the one that uses univocal and simple speech is more certain than the one that uses equivocation and statements with multiple senses, for such result in dubious mean-

⁷ A quote from Dan. 12:4 says that all will be revealed after a long period of time, during which books and speech will be useless, so we are supposed to be able to wait.

ing. So it seems that the approach of other sciences is more certain than in theology.

To the contrary: the way of knowing through inspiration is more certain than the one through human rational thought. Also, what is known from the testimony of the Spirit is more certain than what is known from the evidence gathered from creatures. Also, what is known by way of taste is more certain than what is known by way of sight. Therefore, since the way of sacred Scripture is the way of knowing through inspiration, from the testimony of the Spirit, and by way of taste, while in other sciences the way of knowing is through rational thinking, from the evidence gathered from creatures, and by way of sight, it is clear that the way of knowing in theology is more certain than in other sciences.

[Reply]

There is a certitude of speculation and that of experience. In addition to those, there is a certitude of intellect and a certitude of affection. Also, there is a certitude as far as the spiritual [part of the] soul is concerned and a certitude as far as the animal [part of the] soul is concerned. I say, then, that the theological approach is more certain by the certitude of experience, by the certitude of affection, which is by way of taste <...>, but not more certain as far as intellectual speculation goes, which operates by way of seeing. Also, it is more certain to a spiritual man but less certain to an animal man. <...>

[Answer to objections]

1. A reply to the first objection is clear: i.e., faith is more certain than the intellect in other sciences by the certitude of affection, not by the certitude of speculation.

2. To the second one must say that there are principles of truth *qua* truth, and there are principles of truth *qua* goodness. Other sciences proceed from the principles of truth *qua* truth, which are self-evident. Theology, however, proceeds from the principles of truth *qua* goodness: which are self-evident insofar as goodness is concerned, but concealed and hidden insofar as truth is concerned. Hence this discipline is

based rather on virtue than on science, and it is rather wisdom than science, for it consists rather in virtue and practical efficiency than in contemplation and [speculative] knowledge <...>.

3. To the third one must say that there is a [kind of] certitude [that is sufficient] for an animal man, who only has knowledge from sense experience, and there is a [kind of] certitude [that is sufficient] for a spiritual man, who has the spirit[ual capacity] to contemplate the divine. Now for an animal man an approach through mystical pronouncements does not possess certitude, although it does for a spiritual man <...>.

4. To the final point, one must say that the standards of 'certitude' in the sciences of the human and divine spirit are different. The first kind is constricted by the limits of a single human intellect, which can only understand one thing at a time. The second kind, however, knows no such restriction, for the divine Spirit, who is responsible for this science, is "one but multiple" (Wisdom 7:22). Hence the approach in the Sacred Doctrine: there is one literal meaning, but multiple hidden meanings. And this does not diminish certitude for the soul that is disposed to [receive] this [kind of certitude,] i.e., the spiritual soul, as was said.

<...>⁸

⁸ Articles 3 and 4 have been omitted.