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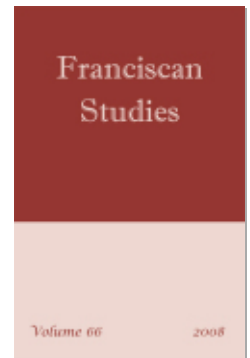
Peter of John Olivi *The Sum of Questions on The Sentences*  
[of Peter Lombard]

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[Answer to the objections]

To #1. As for the objection that it is for the sake of revealing the secrets, one must reply that one need not stop there, for such revelation disposes one towards affection....

<...><sup>17</sup>

**PETER OF JOHN OLIVI**  
***THE SUM OF QUESTIONS ON THE SENTENCES [OF***  
***PETER LOMBARD]***<sup>18</sup>

(TRANSLATED BY **DAVID FLOOD, O.F.M.,**  
**AND OLEG BYCHKOV)**

**PART I**

**Question One**

*What is the subject of sacred Scripture and of this book?*

[Arguments Pro]

1 God, it seems. The subject of a science<sup>19</sup> is that to which everything in that science is reduced. As such it should be the final, simple element of the body of knowledge. In the whole of Scripture however nothing is more final and simple than God. Therefore, and so on.

2 Also, the most lofty and high and encompassing science should treat the most lofty and high and encompassing subject. And so here: no subject can be more lofty, high, and encompassing than God. Therefore, and so on.

3 Also, it seems we can deduce our conclusion from its very name, for it is called theology or knowledge about the divine, which means about God.

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<sup>17</sup> Question 4 has been left out.

<sup>18</sup> This translation is based on the following Latin edition: Peter Olivi, *Summa Quaestionum super Sententias, Pars I, q. 1*, ed. E. Stadter, *Franziskanische Studien* 44 (1962): 2-12.

<sup>19</sup> *scientia*: a formal body of knowledge.

4 It seems that its subject is the whole Christ, with his members,<sup>20</sup> or things and signs, or God and his works.<sup>21</sup> That is the subject of a science of which it treats solely and essentially even in its branches. But Scripture focuses solely on Christ and his members, or on things and signs, or on God and his works. It handles the mystical body of the devil only incidentally, the way medicine treats the destitute.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, and so on.

5 It seems the work of restoration is its subject, for this Scripture concentrates principally on Christ's redemption of the human race. In his letter to the Romans [10:4], the Apostle says that Christ is the "end of the Law." Christ is the reconciliation, which is heralded by the two cherubim, or the two Testaments, who mutually "look one to another" [Ex. 25:20].

6 It seems that the subject is the 'truth of faith,' or the goodness of salvation, or the perfect truth, or the truth that leads surely to God. That is the subject of an ordered body of knowledge that comprises all its components. But under these headings is included everything in Scripture. Indeed, everything there is true, and at the same time a matter of faith, and ordered to the salvation of the elect, and leading to God. Therefore, and so on.

7 It seems that the subject is the divine being (*ens*) as known through revelation. In an ordered body of knowledge everything is analyzed and discussed according to the way we understand and define the subject and according to its level of abstraction. For example, metaphysics only studies something in its being or taken as a being, abstracted from all movement and matter. Mathematics only studies something under the aspect of its quantity, abstracted from all its individual conditions. And so it is with the other bodies of knowledge. Now the science in question does not study anything save insofar as it has been revealed by God. It relies

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<sup>20</sup> I.e., head and body, or Christ and the Church: See Alexander of Hales, Prologue to his *Sum of Theology*, ch. 3, arg. n. 3.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, arg. n. 1-2.

<sup>22</sup> I.e., its subject is essentially health, not particular patients.

solely on divine revelation, abstracting from natural reason or intellect and its principles. Therefore, and so on.

8 It seems that worship of God is its subject. We read in Matthew [22:40] that the whole of the Law and the prophets comes down to two commands, love of God and neighbor. Consequently the precept of charity encompasses everything in Scripture, and worship of God consists in its satisfaction. Therefore, and so on.

9 Also, the subject of a law is the act which it enjoins (e.g., human laws have to do with acts of human justice) or the subjects whom it directs (e.g., the subject of human laws is man as a political or civil being). But this Scripture is [precisely] a law and not an ordered body of knowledge. No ordered body of knowledge issues commands and passes laws, admonishes, threatens, and punishes, but law does. Scripture does all of this. Therefore the subject of Scripture will be the act that it prescribes and the subjects over whom it rules. And it prescribes worship of God, in faith and charity, and it rules over man, as capable of restoration and beatification. Therefore, and so on.

[Arguments Contra]<sup>23</sup>

10 It seems that we cannot settle on any subject in Scripture. We cannot assign, univocally or equivocally, any one subject to a scripture that includes in itself many things which, such as they are, cannot be gathered into any body of knowledge, or at least not into any *one* body of knowledge. But sacred Scripture is of this sort. It contains many mysteries and many future contingents, many precepts and counsels and many particulars, so much so that these things, taken for what they are, belong to its principal purpose. However, these things, taken for what they are, cannot be known through reason and have no place in any body of knowledge. It contains much about God, about angels [and] demons or their actions, both spatial and not; about virtues and vices, about heaven and eternal things, about the human body, in-

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<sup>23</sup> There are no strictly defined Pro and Contra in this text. Instead, the initial statements can be loosely divided into those that suggest that theology does have a unified subject and those that deny that.

sofar as it is subject to suffering both in us and in Christ and was once and will be immortal; and other things of the sort. These things, however, taken for what they are, cannot be assumed into any body of knowledge. Therefore, and so on.

11 Also, every body of knowledge, with its single subject, has as well the corresponding attributes of the given subject and the corresponding principles. Yet we cannot find any one thing in this Scripture, such that all the attributes found in this Scripture would belong to it and its integral and proper parts, and, above all, such that its attributes would belong to it by way of some causes and principles. It cannot be said to have God for its subject, who has neither attributes nor principles. It cannot be said to have as subject the truth as a matter of faith or the good as salutary because a subject cannot be directly predicated of its principles or of its attributes, whereas [in Scripture truth and goodness] are predicated of everything and in the same way, of God and his works, and of things and signs. It cannot be said to have Christ with his members as subject because, although he—as man—and his members do have certain attributes, still the entirety of the attributes that Scripture attributes to them does not fit them according to any one reason—as it should in a subject—, nor does Scripture offer any proofs on their proper principles. The same holds for everything else mentioned above, which different theologians present as the subject of this body of knowledge. Therefore, and so on.

12 Also, [disciplines] which do not share the characteristics of a body of knowledge in a univocal manner cannot “have a subject” in the same sense, since the ability to serve as a body of knowledge depends—as on its formal object—on the ability [of something] to have a [unified] subject. But this Scripture does not have the characteristics of a body of knowledge in the same sense as do other bodies of knowl-

edge. Indeed, everything we have here reaches us in a way more appropriate to faith than to a body of knowledge. That is so because, first, everything presented there<sup>24</sup> [in Scripture] must have an equal standing and degree of certainty.<sup>25</sup> Second, everything [in Scripture] has to be presented simply and absolutely and not by reason of anything which proves or infers it (indeed, if things were believed principally *by reason of* such processes, they would be scientifically known rather than believed). And third, [Scripture] passes on many things in its principal mode of communication which in no way can be known through reason or through the intellect insofar as it works with principles—such as God being one and three, and God being man and a descendent of Abraham, or that Adam was the first man, and that the Antichrist will come, and things like that. All of these examples are particular and have to do with piecemeal things rather than with universals. Nor can they be examined by reason. Nor can those things that derive from them alone. Indeed, if their principles cannot be grasped rationally, nor can those things themselves, insofar as they follow from these [principles], be known through rational causality based [solely] on belief in those principles, but can only be taken on faith. It follows then that this Scripture does not have the kind of structuring characteristic of a [single] subject in the way that other bodies of knowledge do.

13 Also, if the unity of a given body of knowledge depends on the specialty of its subject, it will be distinct from other bodies of knowledge as either more general than they are and encompassing them, or as encompassed by one of them. But no body of knowledge can be more elevated and more general than metaphysics, nor is there any other body of knowledge beyond all bodies of knowledge taken together that encompasses them. And if anyone says that [theology]

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<sup>24</sup> The grammar in this paragraph suggests that the following statements are made about science (*ibi*), not about Scripture (*hic*). However, in this case one must take a counter-intuitive reading, because, unless there is a textual problem here, most of what follows logically corresponds better to the situation in Scripture—which is the way this translation takes it.

<sup>25</sup> Presumably, as opposed to the usual order and hierarchy of information presented in sciences.

is higher because it is based on the principles that are self-evident to God alone and can be grasped by us only through faith, then that leads rather to the conclusion that that body of knowledge does not come to us by the ways of science, but through faith, and that it is faith rather than science, for neither has God given it to us by rational ways.

### **Questions Two and Three**

*In addition to this, we ask about its [theology's] form and purpose.*

[Olivi's Reply to the First Question

A. — Opinions of Others]

Various opinions<sup>26</sup> have circulated and still circulate on this question. Some say that things and signs are the subject of this body of knowledge (*scientia*); or Christ with his members; or the works of restoration; or God and his works. Some say God. Some<sup>27</sup> say the truth of faith, or the salutary good, or perfect truth leading into God.

Some<sup>28</sup> want to make all of that agree. They have said that, for different reasons, all of those things can be taken as the subject of that science. They reason as follows. If the subject is taken as the root and principle of science, in the sense in which words are the source of grammar and terms the source of logic and the point the source of mathematics,<sup>29</sup> in that sense God is its subject. Insofar as the subject is taken for the complete whole, in that sense Christ with his members is its subject, or the works of restoration, or God and his works, or things and signs. Insofar as the subject is taken for the universal whole, in that sense truth of faith, or the salutary good, or truth leading perfectly into God is its subject.

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<sup>26</sup> These opinions in part come from Alexander of Hales' *Sum of Theology*, prol. ch. 3, arg. n. 1-3, and Bonaventure's *Commentary of the Sentences*, prol. q. 1, arg. a-c.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. n. 6 above; also cf. Alexander of Hales, *Sum of Theology*, prol. ch. 1, arg. n. 3 and reply to 3; cf. Bonaventure, *Sent.*, prol. q. 1, arg. c; cf. *ibid.*, q. 2, contra c.

<sup>28</sup> Specifically Bonaventure, *Sent.*, prol. q. 1, Resp.

<sup>29</sup> I.e., geometry.

Others have said that Scripture is not a science but a law.<sup>30</sup> Consequently they have claimed that its subject is worship of God or the acts of all the virtues, especially the theological ones. Or it is man as capable of repair and blessedness through such worship. They do not mean, I think, that in law 'subject' is taken uniformly, or in the same way as in sciences, since with laws nothing is proven about anything. By that I mean that attributes of Scripture are not proven about any subject through the causes and through the principles proper to a subject.

[B. — Peter Olivi's Opinion.]

Some others<sup>31</sup> have said that sacred Scripture does not have one subject. That is the case, they explain, if we use the word subject properly and univocally. Scriptural knowledge does not abide by the notion and method of a science, in its proper sense, in the way other sciences do. Scripture simply makes statements about laws, sciences, histories, about plans of action. It foretells events, it reveals much about God which in no way can be investigated. Among these and similar types of material Scripture includes many individuals: Christ and the Virgin, their ancestors and the apostles, others who led the reprobate, such as Cain, Pharaoh, Saul, and others. It includes many particular acts: the deeds of those ancestors, the wars of kings and peoples, and the whole course of particular instances of time, the journey of the people of God all the way to Christ. Scripture contains as well many particular actions and marvels and kindnesses of God, such as the creation of the world on a certain day in a certain year, and so with all which follows. And in that [course of events] it contains many future contingents, at least the most important events in the future up to the last judgment and what that involves, and the troubles with Antichrist and other such things.

We cannot say, as those others<sup>32</sup> do, that Scripture offers these events only as examples and cases in order to reach by

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. above, n. 9.

<sup>31</sup> As throughout the rest of this section, by the expression 'others' Peter is referring to his own opinion that he cautiously presents as 'another group of theologians.'

<sup>32</sup> See Alexander of Hales, *Sum of Theology*, prol. ch. 1, reply to arg. 1.



induction universal propositions or universal statements of faith. The reason is that these are in themselves of the substance of faith, just like those universal statements. Many other things in Scripture are useful in themselves, besides serving to reach universal principles of that sort. I believe that the singular person of Christ, together with his actions, his sufferings and achievements and virtues, as well as those of the Blessed Virgin and all the great saints whom Scripture mentions, all this has many uses and purposes far beyond the aforementioned ['leading to universals']. Moreover, they say, it is rather those universals [doctrinal statements] that ensure that we adhere to these particulars perfectly rather than the other way around. For there will be no blessedness in abstraction, as they say, but rather in fact. In 'the readiness to go along with' (*credulitate*) Christ factually and with the other saints and in love of them is there justification now.

As these theologians explain, all this is compatible with rational arguments.

a. Scripture shows this by its inclusiveness. We cannot gather everything in it under one heading or treat the material as a single subject. We cannot handle Scripture's contents as if Scripture followed one approach and ranged everything under one universal.

b. Scripture shows this with the condition of its contents. Its contents cannot be divided, universally and in their totality, into one subject and its various integral parts, into its attributes and its principles and causes. Nor can Scripture's contents be broken down into propositions that prove something about the subject. Scripture's contents do not end in conclusions concluding something about the subject or its parts, or in conclusions deducing the subject and its parts form something. In a science, however, everything is divided into such elements or is reduced to such elements. The subject of the science, as a science, contains all such things in itself.

c. Scripture shows this further in handing down, or in the way it hands down, its contents. Scripture passes them on as things to believe. The unity of faith does not require that whatever is believed about anything have one scientific rationale or one subject, as the unity of science requires. By

the faith by which I believe my father I can believe many assertions and negations of various kinds, even *insofar as* they are of different kinds, and much that is factual. However, I cannot know the particulars by one type of reasoning from principles, or through a principle of one sort. Nor can I know [in this way] things of different kinds qua such. In fact, the only thing that I can know through principles is universals and different things *insofar as* they can be organized, analogically or univocally, within one rational system.

d. Scripture shows this fourthly through the fact that things known in it are mutually subject to one another,<sup>33</sup> as was touched upon in the last argument.

e. Also, the nobility of this Scripture, they claim, attests to this. Let us look at its excellence by considering its origins. For all writing bears the imprint of its origins. Now, divine intelligence holds present in its gaze the whole of eternity. All things that it surveys it encompasses in a full gaze as one and the same or as the many aspects of the one and the same. So it encompasses and gazes on particular and contingent realities and things not yet in existence just as it does universals and necessities and actualities. The Scripture that comes from this source has to include in itself the whole course of time and the scope of divine eternity and those things which lie therein, i.e., [all] possibilities. It must also contain, in one text, many meanings and messages, and communicate one and the same thing in different ways and by various methods, speaking about the same thing in different ways. It must declare things particular and contingent and non-existent with the same assurance as it does the universal and necessary and actual.

f. The eminence of Scripture's contents attests to this as well. It could not contain such eminent material unless at the same time it transcended all subject matter, indeed, every particular kind of subject matter, and any one definite order of knowledge. Otherwise it would not have been able to encompass all [types of material], insofar as it is possible and useful, in both general and particular manner. In this too it

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<sup>33</sup> Unlike in a science with one subject and hierarchically organized contents.

bears the imprint of its origins. Indeed, just as [God] stands outside every kind and embraces all things according to both general and particular principles, so also does Scripture, in its fashion.

g. The excellence of Scripture's purpose and its practical efficiency also attest to this. Otherwise it would not succeed in raising every reflection and the certitude of every rational and intelligible learning to transcendent insights, and this with regards to all sorts of human intellects and not only to one intellect alone. Nor would it be able to give rise to all the spiritually useful [sentiments] which God through Scripture could elicit in the human heart, unless it contained an endless variety of material and ways [of dealing with it], transcending every [particular] kind, and unless it possessed the way of stating things simply and absolutely, as God speaks and not as humans: in a way that is prophetic, and not by inquiry and demonstration.

The theologians who think this way offer the following example. Let us suppose that a father wants to lay out for his sons and his friends in writing a distinctive way of going about life. So he compiles for them a brief text that contains some medical and nutritional data, something about mathematics and physics, and a few recent stories about ancestors of theirs, and all of this with advice, rules, warnings and corrections, put together and weighed in accordance with what he thought would be useful. He adds as well forecasts of coming events. We would not be able to say that his compilation had any one subject, in a way sciences have a single subject, seeing as it contains material that is related to many particular and general bodies of learning. In addition, it would contain much else which has nothing to do with the notion of science.

They say that this agrees well enough with the teachings of earlier masters. When these masters<sup>34</sup> say that Scripture is "not a science in the same sense as other sciences" (for it does not proceed by analysis and demonstrations, nor entirely through principles that are evident [to us], save for the faithful), it is sufficiently clear that they do not really want to

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<sup>34</sup> Alexander of Hales, *Sum of Theology*, prol. ch. 2, Solution.

assign Scripture a subject in a completely uniform sense, as in other sciences, but only in terms of one general principle, which includes all Scripture's material gathered together: as coming from one efficient cause; or for one final purpose; or with regard to the way of its communication, which is through revelation and through faith; or under Scripture's general contents, which include all its parts.

Then it is called a "divine science, because it is from God"; or the science of the saints and the prophets because they put it in writing. It is the science of goodness and of saving truth, "leading directly to God,"<sup>35</sup> and of divine worship, for in the end Scripture directly leads to salvation and to God and to divine worship. It is the science of "truth that can be believed"<sup>36</sup> or of the divine being known by revelation,<sup>37</sup> for whatever Scripture contains is given us in this way. Or Scripture is about God and his works or about Christ and his members<sup>38</sup> or about the sacramental signs, for these are the principal and general divisions of Scripture that encompass all its material.

In this sense truly these things can be called the subject or the matter of our Scripture, but not by the rationale and method by which the subject of sciences is determined, which proceed by demonstration or argument.

Consequently, if their position agrees with the intention of the masters of yore, it can be accepted. If however, it seems to contradict the masters' positions in any way, take what you wish from what has been said, for all of it is clear and familiar enough.

#### [Answers to the Objections]

As for the arguments, they do not devolve from the propositions, or at least not from what is commonly

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<sup>35</sup> The opinions presented so far in this passage are from Alexander of Hales, *Sum of Theology*, prol. ch. 2, arg. n. 2 and answer to objections; ch. 1, reply to arg. 3.

<sup>36</sup> Bonaventure, *Sent.*, prol. q. 2, contra c.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. above, n. 7.

<sup>38</sup> Alexander of Hales, *Sum of Theology*, prol. ch. 3, arg. n. 1, 3 and Reply.

conceded, or possibly they go further in their conclusions than allowed.

1 So on to the first argument. I respond that subject is taken here in a different sense than in Aristotle, Bk. I of *Posterior Analytics* [71a-89b], and almost equivocally. Indeed, the principles upon which a subject is founded should not be called the subject. In aforementioned sciences, whatever is most elemental is the principles that establish subjects and their parts, nor is everything reducible to those elemental principles as to the subject of a science, but they function rather as the principle that constitutes the subject. [And] even if we take this as the true nature of the subject, God would still not be the subject because God is not the constituting or root principle of anything. Indeed, in metaphysics there is no such elemental principle. Again, although in created substances we can take primary matter as the elemental root principle, it will not be such as regards all substances and accidents.

2 To the second argument I say that insofar as Scripture is a science, it is about the most noble subject matter. Consequently some say that it is a sign of its singular nobility that it transcends all definite subject matter and encompasses all truth and all knowledge that is useful to us. That is so because it is the teaching of that Spirit that “teaches all truth” [Jn 16:13].

3 As for the third argument, I say that Scripture receives its name from God as its most notable part and its absolutely foremost end. On this account it can be called ‘divine’: because it comes from God, is in God, and leads to God. And the things it contains are divine to the highest degree precisely for this reason<sup>39</sup> because they are transmitted by way of revelation and by God’s word and in reference to God.

4 To the fourth argument I answer that a science handles its subject and its sections in the manner that is appropriate for it—not in the same way as it treats its proper attributes or its proper principles—, although it is more likely to speak about the subject itself when it discusses the attri-

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<sup>39</sup> I.e., because they are contained in it.

butes because then the science proves something about [the subject itself,] and so speaks about it and its parts. Consequently a science handles its subject matter in two ways. Either it investigates and reveals the nature of the subject and its parts, or it [investigates] its attributes. And this it does by rational argument. (But here Christ and his members are not handled in this way, nor are God and his works. It [Scripture] simply reports a great deal about them and speaks about them in other ways that have nothing to do with science, as when it relates commands and advice and persuasions and other such things. It talks about these things in particular as well as universally.) This way of speaking about the subject,<sup>40</sup> rather than other ways, seems closer to the way in which Aristotle speaks of ‘subject’ in sciences, for these other ways speak about some nature that is subject to the attributes that are in it. Consequently there might well be some one science that investigates God and his works, insofar as reason can know them. Indeed, in order to secure the unity of a science it is sufficient for the subject and its nature to have an analogous sort of unity. It is then sufficient to create there a framework of the subject and attributes merely according to the order of understanding. And so we can talk about the divine perfections we prove about God as his ‘attributes.’ It is sufficient for something to be proven about the subject through effects or through some conclusive arguments, even though this would not suffice for the sort of science that proceeds through principles and causes.

Consequently, if sacred Scripture spoke about God and his works in this way, i.e., without mixing in, as in the initial proposal, some legal details, general information, or bringing in history and mysteries and prophecies, then it certainly would have the organization of a science, and then God with things of God would be its subject, or the divine being insofar as it relates to God and his works. (By his works here I mean created substances and not their attributes, because if the latter were taken in their totality, they would not have the organization of a whole nor a partial subject.) However, as it is, Sacred Scripture not only does not speak about them [i.e.,

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<sup>40</sup> I.e., through arguments.

God and his works] in this fashion—nay, it even introduces much of the aforesaid material,<sup>41</sup> as in the initial proposal.

5 As for the fifth argument, I answer that Scripture as a whole has the restoration of the human race as its purpose, as well as its [subject] matter of an indeterminate nature, which [nevertheless] includes many determinate things. It is not that, as a whole, it has this as determinate [subject] matter, as regards which it would everywhere treat of, and prove [something] according to determinate principles.

6 To the sixth argument I say that when one takes the subject in the sense in which Aristotle does in his *Posterior Analytics* [71a-89b], and as it is commonly taken in sciences, the subject [of the science] is not predicated about everything in that science because [it is not predicated] about all its integral parts and its principles and its causes and its attributes. For that reason a mobile body is not predicated about its motions and about its changeable forms and about its material. For that reason also, seeing as being is predicated about everything, some want being as substance to be the subject of metaphysics, and not being in its common meaning, as well as the other basic categories [predicaments] such as attributes of substance and its parts. As for those who say that the subject of [metaphysics] is being in its common meaning, it would also force them to admit that [being,] under the same aspect as it is posited as the subject [of metaphysics,]<sup>42</sup> should not be predicated of those things which are classified as its [i.e., metaphysics'] attributes,<sup>43</sup> except in the case of predication by real identity, as opposed to conceptual [identity].

As for the fact that the 'truth of faith' and the like things are predicated of all [in this discipline], this suggests rather that the subject [of theology] does not possess the consistency characteristic of the subjects of [other] sciences, than that it has [such consistency]. Indeed, the universality of predication (i.e., when predication happens as regards all that is contained in this science)—given some characteristics of the

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<sup>41</sup> I.e., legal details, laws, etc.

<sup>42</sup> I.e., as common.

<sup>43</sup> Which is absurd.



subject [of this science] are outlined—is not sufficient in order to prove that all that which is predicated in this way is the subject, or that it possesses the full characteristics of the subject. Hence almost all the aforesaid arguments proceed by way of implication, because from one characteristic of the subject, be it true or false, they commonly conclude to, and imply the [presence of the] subject, as well as the full range of its characteristics. However, in our case, in addition to being predicated about everything, it would need some principle, according to which that [which is universally predicated] could also be the substrate or subject—either really or conceptually—to the things that are being proved about it (they would have to be proved to be [its] attributes). Furthermore, this principle would have to partake really, either univocally or analogically, in all that is hierarchically under it. However, ‘believable’ does not indicate some common principle in all things that are believable, according to which it would function as a substrate or subject to all such things [i.e., of the sort ‘credible’] that are contained in Scripture. The same holds true for ‘salutary goodness’ and other such things. Furthermore, ‘believable’ does not point at anything real in truths that are taken on faith, but only as far as the disposition of those who believe is concerned—because things that do not exist, or that will only exist in the future are also among the things believed. The same holds true for ‘knowable.’ Hence, just as we would not say that there could be one science about all sciences ‘insofar as they are all knowable’ (because then all sciences could be one science), so it is all the less likely that someone would say that about what is believable. There is, of course, one science that does treat of all that is knowable: it is a part of logic. However, it does not treat things knowable in themselves or according to their natures, as does sacred Scripture with regards to what is believable. Also, in Scripture the ‘salutary good’ is predicated about many accidentally, e.g., about evil men; and as regards those it indicates no ‘principle, in which they partake.’

7 As to the seventh argument, it would have some force if revelation had something rational and abstract to say about things revealed or could generalize about them, as is the case with ‘being’ and ‘substance’ as regards spiritual beings and



substances. As it is, however, revelation does not provide any objective reasoning;<sup>44</sup> it only speaks about the one who reveals, about the signs by which revelation occurs, and about those to whom revelation is made. Nor does revelation provide any subjective reasoning that would prove, about things revealed, all that is passed on in Scripture through its *proper* nature and reasons. It only speaks of the things appropriate for them insofar as they are revealed. Indeed, according to this argument<sup>45</sup> even if anyone received from God by revelation and infusion all sciences with all the arguments involved and then, by divine command, passed them on to others, they would all have the characteristics of one science and one subject.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, based on this, whatever God revealed to people<sup>47</sup> would belong to the contents of this scripture insofar as it would share the characteristics of its subject.<sup>48</sup>

8 To the eighth argument I say sacred Scripture as a whole does depend on this precept as on its end, but the totality of its material does not, for it covers much else.

9 The ninth argument. This could pass as the subject of Scripture if Scripture contained nothing but laws and precepts or statutes, as is the case with human laws. But that is not the case, and so on.

10-13 To the tenth argument I say that it does not conclude to a subject in an unqualified sense, but only to a subject [in a qualified sense (*secundum quid*),] according to the special way in which it is taken in philosophical bodies of knowledge, which proceed solely by way of reason and reflection. And the same can be said for the following arguments.

#### [Reply to the Second Question]

As for the question that then arises about the form of sacred Scripture, what we have said so far gives us the answer. Scripture picks up and uses all those ways of teaching people

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<sup>44</sup> Reading *rationale* for Stadter's *reale*: either a scribal or a transcription error.

<sup>45</sup> I.e., if we treated 'acquired from revelation' as the basis of constructing a common subject.

<sup>46</sup> Which is absurd.

<sup>47</sup> I.e., outside of the existing scriptural text.

<sup>48</sup> Which is, again, absurd.

that are expedient for their common restoration. As for how many of these ways there are, I have said what I could in the “General Principia on Sacred Scripture,”<sup>49</sup> especially when developing the more important and more serious ways. For Scripture speaks historically and legally, wisely and prophetically, exemplarily and metaphorically and spiritually. All these many and various ways are contained in Scripture.

[Reply to the Third Question]

We can see as well from what has been said how to handle the question about the purposes of Scripture. Its purposes comprise every perfection and every salutary goal for the human race and its restoration, both on earth and in heaven, both as concerns mind and affection, and with regards to action as well as to contemplation.

[Final Conclusion]

Just as we cannot give one causal explanation for how Scripture came about, for there are numberless causes, the same holds true about its material and its form and its end. Hence it cannot be labeled as clearly speculative or practical, for it operates in both ways. Nor can it be labeled as solely legal or solely scientific or solely historical nor solely prophetic. It comprises all these ways [of teaching humankind], although it has less of pure inquiry and science, seeing as it is neither right nor proper for it to operate “with the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in the teaching of the Spirit” [I Cor. 2:4]. Nor could it use those ways well, seeing as it is about things that transcend human reason.

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<sup>49</sup> Edited as “Principia quinque in Sacram Scripturam” in *Peter of John Olivi on the Bible*, ed. D. Flood and G. Gál (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1997), 5-151.