



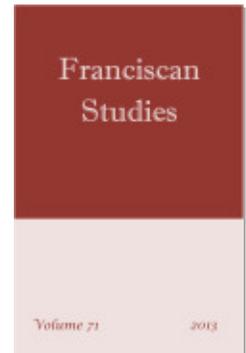
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Bonaventure Commentary on the Sentences [of Peter Lombard]: Prologue

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BONAVENTURE
COMMENTARY ON THE SENTENCES
[OF PETER LOMBARD]⁹

PROLOGUE

(TRANSLATED BY OLEG BYCHKOV)

QUESTION 1

What is the subject of this book, or theology?

[Arguments Pro]

a. It seems that God is the subject. The subject of a science is that about which and about whose properties the science as a whole is; but this whole book is about God and his works, namely, creation and restoration, therefore etc.

b. Also, it seems that the subject of this book is things and signs. For that is the subject of a science, whose division this science follows, for sciences are subdivided according to their subject matter; but this is [in the present case] thing and sign, as has been shown; therefore, etc.

c. Also, it seems that the subject of this book is matters that pertain to belief. For that is the subject of a book, around which the intention and argument of the author are centered—which in this case is matters pertaining to belief. Whence the Master¹⁰ says in the Prologue that his goal is “to strengthen our faith with the shields of the tower of David,” that is, to adduce rational arguments to prove articles of faith: not faith as a habit, but faith as something that has been believed; therefore, etc.

Against that:

1. The subject of a science must contain everything that is treated in it; however, this book treats not only about God,

⁹ The English text is based on the Great Quaracchi edition of the Latin.

¹⁰ I.e., Peter Lombard.

but also about creatures: therefore, God is not the subject of this whole treatise in general, but only of Book One.

2. Also, this same thing can be demonstrated differently. Although the three causes¹¹ may coincide in one, nevertheless the matter (or material cause) does not coincide with the end (or the final cause), for matter refers to something incomplete, while the end implies the completion of the whole work. But it is God who is the end of this whole work, for he is the end of theology as a whole: therefore he is not the subject matter.

3. Also, it seems that ‘things and signs’ are not the subject. For every science is about things or signs: therefore, if ‘things and signs’ were the subject of this book, this book would have a universal application. However, since this book contains some specific teaching and knowledge, it is clear that one cannot assign ‘things and signs’ as its subject matter.

4. Also, it is clear that there are separate sciences for things and for signs: for natural science is different from the science of speech. Therefore, the science contained in this book either belongs to several kinds, or is not about things and signs at the same time; however, it belongs to only one kind, therefore, etc.

5. Also, it seems that its subject is not a matter pertaining to belief, for science and virtue¹² are different dispositions: therefore, their objects will be different. For this reason, since that which pertains to belief, *qua* such, belongs to the realm of virtue, it cannot be *qua* such an object of a science; therefore, etc.

6. Also, just as this book considers faith, it also considers hope and charity: therefore, if something pertaining to hope or love is not the subject of this book, nor will a matter pertaining to belief be its subject.

Response: One should reply that the subject in any science or discipline can be understood in three ways. In one way, the subject of a science is understood as something to which all is drawn as to its root or origin; in another way,

¹¹ I.e., material, formal, and efficient.

¹² I.e., a particular capacity, such as ‘charity,’ ‘faith,’ etc.

as something to which all is drawn as to an integral whole; in the third way, as something to which all is drawn as to a universal whole.¹³

A clear example is provided by the science of grammar. For its subject, according to the first way <...> is letter <...> because it is its simplest element. [Its subject in the second sense] ... is perfect and well-rounded speech. [But its subject in the third sense] ... is a spelled out and articulated word suitable for signifying something in itself or in something else.

<...>

In this way also one can assign a subject of this book according to this triple sense.

For the subject to which all is drawn as to its origin is God himself.

Further, the subject to which all in this book is drawn as to an integral whole, is Christ, insofar as he contains both divine and human natures, or the created together with the uncreated, which is the contents of the first two books. Add to this his 'body' and 'members,'¹⁴ which is the contents of the following two books. Also, the 'integral whole' should be taken broadly, since it comprises many things not only through composition, but also through unity and order.¹⁵

Finally, the subject to which all is drawn as to a universal whole can be named 'thing' or 'sign' disjunctively by way of circumlocution: and the sign here is the Sacrament. We can name it also by a single [Latin] term, which is *credibile*, or 'what pertains to belief,' insofar as that which pertains to belief falls under the principle of intelligibility, which happens through the addition of reason. In this way it is, properly speaking, the subject of this book.

Therefore one must concede the reasons proving that God, 'things and signs,' and 'what pertains to belief' are the subject of this book, in various ways.

<...>

¹³ I.e., something that universally applies to anything treated in this science.

¹⁴ I.e., the Church and believers.

¹⁵ I.e., various ways of ordering things.

Question 2

What is the way of proceeding in this book of Sentences?

Secondly, it is asked about the formal cause, or the way of proceeding. And it has been suggested that it is by a thorough examination and inquiry into mysteries.

Against that:

1. Isaiah 40:23: “God holds the examiners of mysteries as nothing.”

2. Also, Proverbs, 25:27: “The examiner of glory will be suppressed by glory.”

3. Also, Ecclesiasticus 3:22: “Do not seek what is above you, nor investigate what is mightier than you.” Therefore, if that which the Master is investigating are mysteries, great, sublime and mighty things, his way of proceeding is flawed.

4. Also, this is demonstrated by reason, in this way: the way of proceeding in one subsection of a science should be consistent with the way [of proceeding] of this science as a whole. However, the way of proceeding in sacred Scripture is typological and by way of a narrative, not inquiry. Therefore, since this book deals with sacred Scripture, one ought not proceed by way of inquiry.

5. Also, the way of dealing [with something] must correspond to the matter with which it deals. <...> However, the matter of this discipline is something related to belief; but matters of belief are above reason, therefore, a way of proceeding by reasoning is not suitable for this discipline.

6. Also, the way of proceeding should correspond to the goal towards which a science is oriented. But this science, as the Master says in his text, is oriented towards promoting faith. However, reasons do not promote faith, but only invalidate it, whence Gregory says: “Faith, for which human reason provides empirical confirmation, has no merit.” Therefore, such a manner [of proceeding] is contrary to its goal, and therefore inappropriate. Whence Jerome: “Hold back your arguments in the matters of faith. People believe fishermen, not dialecticians.” Therefore this way [of proceeding] seems worthless and useless.

But against that:

a. 1 Peter, 3:15: "...be ready always [to give an answer] to every man that asks you a reason of the hope and faith that is in you...". Therefore, since there are many who not only ask for a reason, but even attack our faith, it seems useful and appropriate to affirm it through reason and proceed by way of inquiry and rationalizing; therefore, etc.

b. Also, Richard of St. Victor says in his book *On the Trinity*: "Without any doubt, I believe that there exist not only probable, but also necessary arguments for the purpose of explaining all things that have necessary existence, although they may perchance be concealed from our [inquisitive] efforts." Therefore, since our faith is belief in necessary things, and moreover their reasons are concealed and require investigation in order to be clarified, it is clear that the way of investigation is most appropriate for this science.

c. Also, the status of the truth of our faith is not inferior to that of other truths. But regarding all those other truths the situation is such that any truth that can be attacked through reasoning can and must be defended by way of reasoning: therefore, the same is the case with the truth of our faith.

d. Also, the present status of our faith is not inferior to its initial status. But initially, when it was under attack by the false miracles of the magicians, it was also defended by the true [miracles] of the Saints. Therefore, since it is presently under attack by the false arguments of the heretics, it must be defended by the true arguments of the scholars.

Response:

One should reply that the way of investigation *is* appropriate to this discipline or book. For since the end necessarily demands the means to this end — for, as the Philosopher says, "the scythe is serrated because it serves the purpose of cutting" —, in the same way, this book, because it serves the purpose of promoting faith, has the form of inquiry. For the way of reasoning and inquiry is certainly valid for the purpose of promoting faith, in three different ways, according to the three different types of people. For there are some who are enemies of the faith, some whose faith is weak, and some whose faith is perfect.

The mode of inquiry is valid first of all in order to confound the adversaries. <...> Secondly, it is valid in order to support the feeble ones. <...> For if the weak saw that no probable reasons in favor of faith were present, and the opposite reasons were abundant, no one [of them] would persist. Third, it is valid in order to delight the perfect. For in some mysterious way the soul is delighted in understanding what it believes with its unshaken faith. Whence St. Bernard says: “No understanding is more pleasant than that of the things that we already believe by faith.”

Answer to the objections

<...>

To # 5. As for your objection that [the method] must correspond to the subject matter, one must reply that it does. As for the objection that matters of belief are above reason, this is true [in the sense that they are] above reason as far as acquired knowledge is concerned, but not above reason elevated through faith, or the gift of science and understanding. For faith elevates us towards assent, while science and understanding elevates us towards understanding those things that we believe in.

To #6. As for the objection that it is not appropriate for its end, because it invalidates the merit, one must reply that when one assents to reason on its own account, then the point of faith is suspended, for the human soul is dominated by the violence of reason. But when faith does not assent on account of reason, but on account of the love of him to whom it assents, it desires to have reasons. And then human reason does not invalidate the merit, but increases the solace....

Question 3

Is this book, or theology, for the sake of contemplation, or for the purpose of us becoming good, i.e., is it a speculative or a practical science?

[Arguments Pro]

Third, it is asked about the final cause. And since it has been said that this book is for the purpose of revealing the mysteries, it is asked whether this work is for the sake of con-

templation or for the purpose of improving us. And it seems that it is for the sake of us becoming good, for the following reasons:

a. Any teaching about those things, without whose knowledge we cannot live righteously, serves the purpose of us becoming good. But this book is precisely for the sake of learning the true faith, without which it is “impossible to please God” or live righteously, as is said in Hebrews 11:6; therefore, this book is for the sake of our improvement.

b. Also, any teaching whose object is the same as that of a virtue is for the purpose of our improvement: this is obvious in itself. But the object of this teaching is the same as that of faith,¹⁶ for it is about matters of belief, something that faith also deals with; therefore, etc.

c. Also, the end of a subdivision of a discipline coincides with the end of the discipline as a whole; but the end of sacred Scripture as a whole is not only us becoming good, but also us becoming blessed; blessedness is the best thing; therefore the end of this discipline is [for sure] our improvement.

Against that:

1. The Master says in his text that his goal or intention is to “lay open the secrets of theological inquiry”: but this pertains to something that has speculation as its goal; therefore, etc.

2. Also, the discipline that is for sake of our improvement pertains to our morals. However, although theology is, indeed, about faith and morals, this particular book [Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*] is about those things that pertain to faith, not morals; therefore, this work is not for the purpose of us becoming good.

3. Also, any science, which is for the sake of our improvement, is practical. But any such science is about those things that originate from our [own] works. However, this one is not about those things that originate from our works, but from God: therefore it is for the sake of contemplation, not our improvement.

¹⁶ And faith is one of the virtues.

Response:

In order to make sense of the aforesaid things it must be noted that it is our intellect or understanding that is perfected by a science. And it [i.e., the intellect] should be understood in three different ways: in itself, insofar as it extends towards affection, or insofar as it extends towards action (and our intellect extends itself by way of command or control). According to this threefold condition, because it has a tendency to err, the intellect possesses three ways of regulating itself through a habit or disposition [such as a science]. For if we consider the intellect in itself, in this way it is properly speaking speculative and is perfected by a habit which serves the purpose of contemplation and is called speculative science. Now if we consider the intellect as naturally capable of extending itself toward action, in this way it is perfected by a habit that serves the purpose of our improvement: which is practical or moral science. But if one considers it from an intermediate point of view, insofar as it is naturally capable of extending itself towards affection, in this way it is perfected by a habit that occupies an intermediate position between purely speculative and practical, and which embraces both. And this habit is called wisdom, which implies both cognition (or knowledge) and affection at the same time... <...> Whence this [habit] is for the sake of both contemplation and our improvement, but mainly for the purpose of our improvement.

Such is the sort of cognition that is treated in this book. For this sort of cognition or knowledge helps faith, and faith is positioned in the intellect in such a way that, insofar as it contains its elements (or principles), it is naturally capable of moving our affection. This is quite clear. Indeed, the knowledge of the type 'Christ died for us' and the like—unless the person is an inveterate sinner—moves one to love, unlike this one: 'the diameter is incommensurate with the semicircle [based on this diameter].'

Therefore we must concede that it is for the sake of our improvement.

[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....

<...>¹⁷

PETER OF JOHN OLIVI
THE SUM OF QUESTIONS ON THE SENTENCES [OF
PETER LOMBARD]¹⁸

(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 science¹⁹ 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.

¹⁷ Question 4 has been left out.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ *scientia*: a formal body of knowledge.