

SUPER DE TRINITATE
BOETHII

QUESTIO II

DE MANIFESTATIONE DIVINAE COGNITIONIS
ON THE MANIFESTATION OF KNOWLEDGE CONCERNING THE DIVINE

Article 3

Utrum in scientia fidei, quae est de Deo, liceat rationibus philosophicis et auctoritatibus uti? Whether in the science of faith, which is concerned with God, it is licit to use the rationales of philosophers and authorities?

Objections

Ad tertium sic proceditur: videtur quod in his quae sunt fidei non liceat philosophicis rationibus uti. I Cor. I: *non misit me Christus baptizare, sed evangelizare: non in sapientia verbi*, Glossa *in doctrina philosophorum*; et super illud: *ubi inquisitor huius saeculi?* dicit Glossa: *inquisitor est qui naturae secreta rimatur, tales non recipit Deus inter praedicatores*; et super illud, II c.: *sermo meus et praedicatio mea fuit non in persuasibilibus humanae sapientiae verbis*, dicit Glossa: *et si persuasibilia fuerunt verba mea, non tamen per humanam sapientiam, ut verba pseudoapostolorum*. Ex quibus omnibus videtur quod in his quae sunt fidei non liceat rationibus philosophicis uti.

Obj. 1: It seems that in regard to those truths that are of faith it is not right to employ the rational arguments of the natural philosophers, for, according to 1 Corinthians 1:17, *Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not wisdom of speech*; that is, *in the doctrine of the philosophers*, as the gloss says. And concerning the line, *where is the disputer of this world?* (1 Cor 1:20), the gloss says: *the disputer is he who searches into the secrets of nature; such men God does not accept as preachers*. And on the line, *and my speech and my preaching was not in the persuasive words of human wisdom* (1 Cor 2:4), the gloss says: *although the words were persuasive, they were not so because of human wisdom, as is the word of pseudo-apostles*. From all these lines it is evident that in matters of faith it is not lawful to employ philosophical reasoning.

Praeterea. Isa. XV super illud: *nocte vastata est Ar* dicit Glossa: *Ar, id est adversarius, scilicet scientia saecularis, quae adversaria est Deo*. Ergo scientia saeculari in his quae Dei sunt uti non debemus.

Praeterea. Ambrosius dicit: *sacramentum fidei a philosophicis argumentis est liberum*. Ergo ubi de fide agitur, philosophorum rationibus et dictis uti non licet.

Praeterea. Hieronymus refert in epistula ad Eustochium virginem se in visione verberatum divino iudicio fuisse pro eo quod in libris legerat Ciceronis, et qui astabant precabantur ut veniam tribueret adolescentiae, exacturus deinde cruciatum si gentilium libros aliquando legisset; unde obtestans nomen Dei clamavit: *Domine, si umquam habuero saeculares codices, si legero, te negavi*. Si ergo non licet in eis studere et legere, multo minus licet eis in divinis tractatibus uti.

Praeterea. Sapientia saecularis frequenter in Scriptura per aquam significatur, sapientia vero divina per vinum. Sed Isa. I vituperabuntur caupones aquam vino miscentes. Ergo vituperandi sunt doctores qui sacrae doctrinae philosophica documenta admiscent.

Praeterea. Sicut dicit Hieronymus in Glossa Osee II, cum haereticis nec nomina debemus habere communia. Sed haeretici utuntur ad fidei corruptionem philosophicis documentis, ut habetur in Glossa Prov. VII et Isa. XV. Ergo Catholici eis in suis tractatibus uti non debent.

Praeterea. Sicut quaelibet scientia habet principia propria, ita et sacra doctrina, scilicet articulos fidei. Sed in aliis scientiis non recte proceditur si assumantur alterius scientiae principia, sed oportet in

Obj. 2: On that line, *because in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste* (Isa 15:1), the gloss says: *Ar, that is, the adversary, namely, secular science, which is the adversary of God; therefore, etc.*

Obj. 3: Ambrose says: *the deepest mysteries of faith are free from the reasonings of the philosophers*; therefore, when a matter of faith is dealt with, the reasonings and words of the philosophers ought not to be used.

Obj. 4: Jerome relates in a letter to Eustochium that in vision he was beaten, according to divine justice, because he had read the books of Cicero, and that those standing by besought that leniency might be granted on account of his youth, and that afterward the extreme penalty should be exacted if he read again the books of the Gentiles; wherefore, calling upon the name of God, he exclaimed: *if ever I shall possess secular books, if ever I read them, I shall have denied You*; therefore it is not lawful to use them in treating of divine things.

Obj. 5: In Scripture, secular wisdom is often represented by water, but divine wisdom by wine. Now, according to Isaiah 1, the innkeepers are upbraided for mixing water with wine; therefore the doctors are blameworthy for their mingling of philosophical doctrine with sacred Scripture.

Obj. 6: Jerome says, in his gloss on Hosea 2, *with heretics we ought not to have even names in common*. But heretics use the arguments of philosophers to destroy faith, as is maintained in the gloss on Proverbs 7 and Isaiah 15; therefore Catholics ought not to use such in their discussions.

Obj. 7: Every science has its proper principles, and thus also sacred doctrine has those that belong to it, namely, the articles of faith; but in other sciences the process is not valid if principles are taken from a different science, but each

unaquaque ex propriis principiis procedere, secundum doctrinam Philosophi in I Posteriorum. Ergo nec in sacra doctrina recte proceditur si quis ex documentis philosophorum procedit.

Praeterea. Si alicuius doctrina in aliquo repudiatur, eius auctoritas invalida est ad aliquid confirmandum; unde dicit Augustinus quod si in Sacra Scriptura concesserimus aliquid esse falsitatis, peribit eius auctoritas ad fidei confirmationem. Sed sacra doctrina in multis doctrinam philosophorum repudiat, quia in multis errasse inveniuntur. Ergo eorum auctoritas non est efficax ad aliquid confirmandum.

Sed contra est quod Apostolus, Titus I, Epimenidis poetae versiculo usus est, dicens: *cretenses semper mendaces, malae bestiae, ventres pigri*, et I Cor. XV verbis Menandri: *corrumpunt bonos mores colloquia prava*, et Athenis usus est verbis Arati: *ipsius*, scilicet Dei, et *genus sumus*, ut habetur Acts XVII. Ergo et aliis divinae Scripturae doctoribus licet philosophicis argumentis uti.

Praeterea. Hieronymus in epistula ad Magnum urbis Romae oratorem, enumeratis pluribus sacrae Scripturae doctoribus, ut Basilio, Gregorio et quibusdam aliis, subiungit: *qui omnes in tantum philosophorum doctrinis atque sententiis suos referserunt libros, ut nescias quid in eis primum mirari debeas, utrum eruditionem saeculi vel scientiam scripturarum. Quod non fecissent si non licuisset vel non utile fuisset.*

Praeterea. Hieronymus in epistula ad Pammachium de dormitione Paulinae: *si adamaveris captivam, id est sapientiam saecularem, et eius pulchritudine captus fueris, decalva eam, et illecebras crinium atque*

ought to proceed from its own principles, according to the teaching of the Philosopher (*Posterior Analytics*, 1); therefore the method is not permissible in sacred doctrine.

Obj. 8: If the doctrine of anyone is repudiated in any respect, the authority of his teaching will not be valid in proving anything; wherefore Augustine says that, if in sacred doctrine we discover some falsity, the authority of that teaching is destroyed for confirming anything in regard to faith; but sacred doctrine repudiates the doctrine of the philosophers in many ways, because many errors are found among them; therefore their authority has no efficacy in proving anything (regarding sacred doctrine).

On the contrary, the Apostle makes use of a verse from the poet Epimenides, saying, *the Cretans are always liars, evil beasts* (Titus 1:12); and he employs the words of Menander: *evil conversations corrupt good manners* (1 Cor 15:33); and in Acts 17:28 are the words of Aratus, *for we are also his* (namely, God's) *offspring*. Therefore it is licit for other doctors of divine Scripture also to make use of the arguments of the philosophers.

Moreover, Jerome, in a letter to Magnus, a famous orator of Rome, having enumerated many doctors of Scripture, such as Basil and Gregory, adds: *all these have so intermingled in their books the teachings and the sayings of the philosophers that one knows not which to admire first in them, their secular erudition or their knowledge of the Scriptures*. But this they would not have done had such been illicit or useless.

Moreover, Jerome in a letter to Pammachius about the death of Paula says: *you have become enamored of the captive woman, secular wisdom, and captivated by her beauty, cut her hair and her finger nails, cut away the enticement of her tresses*

ornamenta verborum cum tenacibus unguibus seca, lava eam prophetali nitro, et requiescens cum illa dicito: 'sinistra eius sub capite meo et dextera illius amplexabitur me', et multos tibi captiva fetus dabit, ac de Moabitide efficietur tibi Israelites. Ergo fructuosum est ut aliquis sapientia saeculari utatur.

and the adornments of her words, bathe her with prophetic niter, and, lying with her, say: "his left hand under my head, and his right hand shall embrace me" (Song 8:3), and many children will the captive woman give to you, and from the Moabite, Israelites will be born to you. Therefore with fruitful results some make use of secular wisdom.

Praeterea. Augustinus dicit in II De Trinitate: *non ero segnis ad inquirendam substantiam Dei sive per scripturam sive per creaturam. Sed cognitio de creaturis in philosophia proponitur. Ergo non est inconueniens quod aliquis in sacra doctrina rationibus philosophicis utatur.*

Moreover, Augustine (*On the Trinity*, 2) says: *I shall not be without zeal in seeking out knowledge of God, whether through Scripture or creatures; but knowledge of God through creatures is given in philosophy; therefore it is not unfitting that in sacred doctrine one should make use of philosophical reasoning.*

Praeterea. Augustinus in II De doctrina christiana: *philosophi autem qui dicuntur, si qua forte vera et fidei nostrae accomoda dixerunt, non solum formidanda non sunt, sed ab eis tamquam iniustis possessoribus in usum nostrum vindicanda. Et sic idem quod prius.*

Moreover, Augustine (*On Christian Doctrine*, 2) says: *if the philosophers have by chance uttered truths helpful to our faith, they are not only not to be feared, but rather those truths ought to be taken from them as from unjust possessors and used to our advantage. Thus the conclusion is as before.*

Praeterea. Dan. I super illud: *proposuit autem Daniel etc.* dicit Glossa: *si quis imperitus mathematicae artis contra mathematicos scribat, aut expers philosophiae contra philosophos agat, quis etiam ridendus, vel ridendo, non rideat? Sed oportet quandoque doctorem Sacrae Scripturae contra philosophos agere. Ergo oportet eum philosophia uti.*

Moreover, on the saying in Daniel 1:8, *but Daniel purposed in his heart*, the gloss says: *if anyone ignorant of mathematics should write in opposition to the mathematicians, or knowing nothing of philosophy should argue against the philosophers, would he not be derided? But doctors of sacred Scripture must at times argue with philosophers; therefore it is needful that they make use of philosophy.*

Responsio.

Dicendum, quod dona gratiarum hoc modo naturae adduntur, quod eam non tollunt sed magis perficiunt; unde et lumen fidei, quod nobis gratis infunditur, non destruit lumen naturalis rationis divinitus nobis inditum. Et quamvis lumen naturale mentis humanae sit insufficiens ad manifestationem eorum quae manifestantur per fidem, tamen

I answer that

it must be said that gifts of grace are added to those of nature in such a way that they do not destroy the latter, but rather perfect them; wherefore also the light of faith, which is gratuitously infused into us, does not destroy the natural light of reason, which is divinely infused into us. For although the natural light of the human mind is insufficient for the revelation of those things which are revealed by

impossibile est quod ea quae per fidem traduntur nobis divinitus, sint contraria his quae sunt per naturam nobis indita: oporteret enim alterum esse falsum, et cum utrumque sit nobis a Deo, Deus nobis esset auctor falsitatis, quod est impossibile; sed magis, cum in imperfectis inveniatur aliqua imitatio perfectorum, in ipsis quae per naturalem rationem cognoscuntur sunt quaedam similitudines eorum quae per fidem sunt tradita.

Sicut autem sacra doctrina fundatur supra lumen fidei, ita philosophia fundatur supra lumen naturale rationis; unde impossibile est quod ea quae sunt philosophiae sint contraria his quae sunt fidei, sed deficiunt ab eis, continent tamen aliquas eorum similitudines et quaedam ad ea praeambula, sicut natura praeambula est ad gratiam. Si quid autem in dictis philosophorum invenitur contrarium fidei, hoc non est philosophiae, sed magis philosophiae abusus ex defectu rationis; et ideo possibile est ex principiis philosophiae huiusmodi errorem refellere, vel ostendendo omnino esse impossibile, vel ostendendo non esse necessarium: sicut enim ea quae sunt fidei non possunt demonstrative probari, ita quaedam contraria eis non possunt demonstrative ostendi esse falsa, sed potest ostendi ea non esse necessaria.

Sic ergo in sacra doctrina philosophia possumus tripliciter uti:

primo ad demonstrandum ea quae sunt praeambula fidei, quae necesse est in fide scire, ut ea quae naturalibus rationibus de Deo probantur, ut Deum esse, Deum esse unum, et alia huiusmodi vel de Deo

faith, yet it is impossible that those things which God has manifested to us by faith should be contrary to those which are introduced to us by natural knowledge: it would thus be necessary for one of the two to be false, and since each is given to us by God, God would thus be the author of falsity, which is impossible; but rather, since in imperfect things there is found some imitation of the perfect, in those things cognized by natural reason there are certain similitudes of those things handed over through faith.

Now, just as sacred doctrine is founded upon the light of faith, so too philosophy is founded upon the light of natural reason. Thus it is impossible that those things which belong to philosophy should be contrary to those that belong to faith—but rather they are deficient as compared to them—and yet they nevertheless incorporate some similitudes of those higher truths, and some things that are preambles to them, just as nature is the preamble to grace. If, however, anything is found in the teachings of the philosophers contrary to faith, this is not properly something that belongs to philosophy, but is rather due to an abuse of philosophy owing from a deficit in reasoning. And therefore it is possible, from the principles of philosophy to refute an error of this kind, either by showing it to be altogether impossible, or not to be necessary. For just as those things which belong to faith cannot be demonstratively proved, so too certain things contrary to them cannot be demonstratively shown to be false—but they can be shown not to be necessary.

Thus, in sacred doctrine we are able to make a threefold use of philosophy:

First, for the sake of demonstrating those things that are preambles to faith and that have a necessary place in the act of knowing by faith: such are the truths about God that can be proved by natural reason—such as that God exists, that God is one, and other such notions concerning either God

vel de creaturis in philosophia probata, quae fides supponit;

secundo ad notificandum per aliquas similitudines ea quae sunt fidei, sicut Augustinus in libro De Trinitate utitur multis similitudinibus ex doctrinis philosophicis sumptis ad manifestandum trinitatem;

tertio ad resistendum his quae contra fidem dicuntur, sive ostendendo ea esse falsa, sive ostendendo ea non esse necessaria. Tamen utentes philosophia in sacra doctrina possunt dupliciter errare:

uno modo in hoc quod utantur his quae sunt contra fidem, quae non sunt philosophiae, sed corruptio vel abusus eius, sicut Origenes fecit;

alio modo, ut ea quae sunt fidei includantur sub metis philosophiae, ut scilicet si aliquis credere nolit nisi quod per philosophiam haberi potest, cum e converso philosophia sit ad metas fidei redigenda, secundum illud Apostoli II Cor. X: *in captivitatem redigentes omnem intellectum in obsequium Christi*.

Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod ex omnibus verbis illis ostenditur quod doctrina philosophorum non sit utendum quasi principali, ut scilicet propter eam veritas fidei credatur, non tamen removetur quin ea possint uti sacri doctores quasi secundaria; unde ibidem super illud: *perdam sapientiam sapientum* dicit Glossa: *non ideo hoc dicit ut veritatis intelligentia possit a Deo reprobare, sed quia eorum prudentia reprobatur qui in sua eruditione confidunt*. Ut tamen totum quod est fidei non humanae potentiae aut sapientiae tribueretur, ideo voluit Deus ut primitiva

or His creatures, subject to philosophical proof, which faith presupposes.

Second, for the sake making better-known, by certain similitudes, those things which belong to faith; as Augustine in his book, *On the Trinity*, employs many comparisons taken from the teachings of the philosophers for the purpose of revealing the Trinity.

Third, for the sake of resisting those who speak against the faith, either by showing their statements to be false, or by showing that they are not necessarily true. Nevertheless, in the use of philosophy in sacred Scripture, there can be a twofold error.

In one way, by using those things which are contrary to faith, which are not truths of philosophy, but rather a corruption or abuse of philosophy, as Origen did.

In another way, by using them in such manner as to include the truths of faith under the measure of philosophy, as if one should be willing to believe nothing except what could be held by philosophic reasoning; when, on the contrary, philosophy should be rendered to the measure of faith, according to the saying of the Apostle, *bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ* (2 Cor 10:5).

Reply Obj. 1: It may be said: from all these words it is shown that philosophical doctrine ought not to be used as if it had first place, as if on account of it one believed by faith; nevertheless the fact is not disproved that doctors of sacred learning may employ philosophy, as it were, secondarily. Wherefore, on the saying, *I will destroy the wisdom of the wise*, the gloss adds: *this he does not say because the understanding of truth can be worthy of God's anger, but because the false prudence of those who trusted in their erudition is worthy of reproof* (1 Cor 1:19). Nevertheless, in order that all that is of faith might be attributed not to human power

apostolorum praedicatio esset in infirmitate et simplicitate; cui tamen postea potentia et saecularis sapientia superveniens ostendit per victoriam fidei mundum esse Deo subiectum et quantum ad potentiam et quantum ad sapientiam.

or wisdom but to God, God willed that the primitive preaching of the apostles should be in infirmity and simplicity; though, on the other hand, with the later advent of power and secular wisdom, he manifested by the victory of the faith that the world is subject to God as much by wisdom as by power.

Ad secundum dicendum, quod sapientia saecularis dicitur esse contraria Deo quantum ad eius abusum, sicut ea haeretici abutuntur, non quantum ad eius veritatem.

Reply Obj. 2: It may be said: secular wisdom is said to be contrary to God in so far as it is an abuse of wisdom (i.e., erroneous) as when heretics abuse it, but not in so far as it is true.

Ad tertium dicendum, quod sacramentum fidei pro tanto dicitur liberum a philosophicis argumentis, quia sub metis philosophiae non coartatur, ut dictum est.

Reply Obj. 3: It may be answered: the sacred deposit of the truth of faith is said to be free from philosophical doctrine inasmuch as it is not confined by the limits of philosophy.

Ad quartum dicendum, quod Hieronymus adeo afficiebatur ad gentilium libros, quod sacram scripturam quodammodo contemnebat; unde ipsemet ibidem dicit: *si quando in memet reversus prophetas legere coepissem, sermo horrebat incultus*. Et hoc esse reprehensibile nullus ambigit.

Reply Obj. 4: It may be said: Jerome was so influenced by certain books of the Gentiles that he contemned, in a way, sacred Scripture: wherefore he himself says: *if I began to read it while turning over the words of the Prophets in my own mind, their crude expression filled me with distaste*. And no one will deny that such was reprehensible.

Ad quintum dicendum, quod ex tropicis locutionibus non est sumenda argumentatio, ut dicit Magister XI distinctione III Sententiarum, et Dionysius dicit in epistola ad Titum quod symbolica theologia non est argumentativa, et praecipue cum illa expositio non sit alicuius auctoris. Et tamen potest dici quod quando alterum duorum transit in dominium alterius, non reputatur mixtio, sed quando utrumque a sua natura alteratur; unde illi qui utuntur philosophicis documentis in sacra doctrina redigendo in obsequium fidei, non miscent aquam vino, sed aquam convertunt in vinum.

Reply Obj. 5: It may be said: no conclusive argument can be drawn from figurative speech, as the Master Peter Lombard says (*Sentences*, 3, dist. 11). Dionysius also says in his letter to Titus that symbolic theology has no weight of proof, especially when such interprets no authority. Nevertheless it can be said that when one of two things passes into the nature of another, the product is not considered a mixture except when the nature of both is altered. Wherefore those who use philosophical doctrines in sacred Scripture in such a way as to subject them to the service of faith, do not mix water with wine, but change water into wine.

Ad sextum dicendum, quod Hieronymus loquitur de illis nominibus quae ab haereticis sunt inventa

Reply Obj. 6: It may be said: Jerome is speaking of those arguments that were invented by heretics to give support to

accommoda suis erroribus; philosophicae autem disciplinae non sunt tales, immo earum abusus solum in errorem ducit, et ideo non sunt propter hoc vitandae.

Ad septimum dicendum, quod scientiae quae habent ordinem ad invicem hoc modo se habent quod una potest uti principiis alterius, sicut scientiae posteriores utuntur principiis scientiarum priorum, sive sint superiores sive inferiores; unde metaphysica, quae est omnibus superior, utitur his quae in aliis scientiis sunt probata. Et similiter theologia, cum omnes aliae scientiae sint huic quasi famulantes et praeambulae in via generationis quamvis sint dignitate posteriores, potest uti principiis omnium aliarum scientiarum.

Ad octavum dicendum, quod in quantum sacra doctrina utitur philosophicis documentis propter se, non recipit ea propter auctoritatem dicentium sed propter rationem dictorum; unde quaedam bene dicta accipit et alia respuit. Sed quando utitur eis propter alios refellendos, utitur eis in quantum sunt in auctoritatem illis qui refelluntur, quia testimonium ab adversariis est efficacius.

their errors; but such doctrines do not belong to philosophy; rather they lead only to error; and consequently on their account the truths of philosophy ought not be shunned.

Reply Obj. 7: Answer may be made: sciences which are ordered to one another are so related that one can use the principles of another, just as posterior sciences can use the principles of prior sciences, whether they are superior or inferior: wherefore metaphysics, which is superior in dignity to all, uses truths that have been proved in other sciences. And in like manner theology—although all other sciences are related to it in the order of generation, as serving it and as preambles to it—can make use of the principles of all the others, even if they are posterior to it in dignity.

Reply Obj. 8: It may be said: inasmuch as sacred doctrine makes use of the teachings of philosophy for their own sake, it does not accept them on account of the authority of those who taught them, but on account of the reasonableness of the doctrine; wherefore it accepts truth well said and rejects other things: but when it uses these doctrines to refute certain errors, it uses them inasmuch as their authority is esteemed by those whose refutation is desired, because the testimony of an adversary has in that case greater weight.