ON SCRIPTURE IN THE SUMMA THEOLOGIAE

by Michael M. Waldstein

According to some interpreters, St. Thomas's Summa Theologiae is an example of rational-systematic construction distinct from the interpretation of Scripture.

Saint Thomas is one of the most notable witnesses of this distinction between works of exegesis and biblical theology on the one hand and theology properly speaking or rational theology on the other, a dissociation which was already prepared in the twelfth century....It is theology, now an autonomous science, which becomes the key and the point of convergence of all the other annexed disciplines: grammar, philology, patristics and exegesis.¹

A similar judgment is the more or less conscious foundation of the widespread practice of reading the Summa Theologiae as a systematic text akin to Descartes's Meditations or Hegel's Logic. One of the features of this practice is the understanding of distinct sections of the Summa as relatively independent "treatises," building blocks of the system. On such a reading, the "treatise" De Deo Uno (Summa Theologiae, I qq. 2-26) takes on particular importance. It is the first "treatise" and therefore the foundation on which the Summa's entire edifice is allegedly erected, similar

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to Descartes’s “cogito” and ontological proof of God’s existence in the Meditations.

If this reading is correct, one is faced with acute problems:

These five ways have been generally taken to provide the warrant for the assertion of the third article [Summa Theologiae I, q. 2, a. 3] that God is and to parallel in their importance what St. Thomas wrote about similar argumentation in the Summa contra Gentiles... Concluding to the assertion of the divine existence is obtained, maintains Aquinas in Summa Theologiae I q. 2, a. 2, ad 2, by rationem naturalem. The response in which the argument is formulated makes no appeal to the mysteries of Christ, the disclosures of the indwelling Spirit, the experiences of holiness, the special influence of grace, Christian history, revelation etc. Many have read Aquinas as proposing that what can be obtained by rationem naturalem is adequate as foundation for his treatment of the reality of God in the subsequent questions 3–26, antecedent to his consideration of the Trinity as such. The only explicit appeal to something beyond rationem naturalem... [is] contained in the “sed contra,” propositions read by many to function as proof-texts to indicate that what is concluded in the “respondeo dicendum quod” coincides with the word of God as contained in Scripture. This means that critically important questions such as those bearing on the goodness of God, the love and mercy of God, divine providence, predestination, and reprobation, are treated as if they did not demand that the Christ-Event be given a pivotal, even specifying position in their consideration.²

The present essay argues for three main conclusions. First, far from being intended as a sample of rational theology, conceived as an autonomous science dissociated from Scripture, the Summa Theologiae is a particular pedagogical voice at the service of Scripture. Second, far from proceeding more geometrico to construct a system in the Cartesian sense, the Summa Theologiae offers complementary perspectives on a reality that remains indivisible and inexhaustible. Third, far from being the foundation on which the edifice of the Summa Theologiae is erected, the five ways in particular are intended to manifest to us as knowers dependent on sensation what is already and more eminently contained in God’s revelation and held by faith.

The essay approaches these conclusions by turning, first, to St. Thomas’s discussion of the nature of sacred teaching; second, to his claim that Scripture, the divinely revealed truth, is the all-encompassing foundation of sacred teaching; third, to the central role of Christ in the fourfold sense of Scripture.

I

SACRED TEACHING AND “THE RIVERS”

At the very beginning of his commentary on Peter Lombard’s Sentences, St. Thomas interprets the rivers of paradise as signs of the Trinity and its revelation.

...sibi manifestatio dicentis Patris convenit et totius Trinitatis.

Unde dicitur, “Nemo novit Patrem nisi Filius et cui Filius voluerit revelare” et “Deum nemo vidit unquam, nisi unigenitus qui est in sinu Patris.”

...it belongs to him [the Son] to be the manifestation of the Father who utters [him as Word] and of the whole Trinity.

And so it is said, “No one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him” (Matthew 11:27), and “No one has ever seen God except the only-begotten who is in the bosom of the Father” (John 1:18).
Recte ergo dicitur ex persona Filii: “Ego sapientia effundit fluminia.” Fluminia ista intelligo fluxus aeternae processionis, qua Filius a Patre, et Spiritus Sanctus ab utroque, ineffabili modo procedit.

Ista fluminia olim occulta et quodammodo confusa erant, tum in similitudinibus creaturarum, tum etiam in aeignatibus scripturarum…

Venit Filius et inclusa flumina quodammodo effudit, nomen Trinitatis publicando, “Docete omnes gentes, baptizantes eos in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti.” Uncle “Profunda fluviorum scrutatus est et abscondita in lucem produxit.” (Commentary on the Sentences, Prologue).

In his commentary on Psalm 22,15 (“I am poured out like water and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast.”), St. Thomas develops another aspect of revelation along similar lines. It is in the passion, concentrated in the piercing of Jesus’s side and the flow of blood and water, that the rivers of the Trinity are opened up.

Per cor Christi intelligitur Sacra Scriptura, quae manifestat cor Christi. Hoc autem erat clausum ante passionem, quia erat obscura; sed aperta est post passionem, quia eam iam intelligentes con-

By “the heart” (Ps 22,15) of Christ one understands sacred Scripture, which manifests the heart of Christ. For this [heart] was closed before the passion, because [Scripture] was dark;

...theologia quae ad sacram doctrinam pertinent, differt secundum genus ab illa theologia quae pars philosophiae ponitur (Summa Theologiae I, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2).  

...the account of God which belongs to sacred teaching differs in kind from that account of God which is laid down as a part of philosophy.

Although sacred teaching differs in kind from philosophical accounts, it can employ them to make what God reveals more manifest to us, given our mode of knowledge.
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Haec scientia accipere potest aliquid a philosophicis disciplinis, non quod ex necessitate eis indigeat, sed ad maiorem manifestationem eorum quae in hac scientia traduntur. Non enim accipit sua principia ab aliis scientiis, sed immediate a Deo per revelationem (Summa Theologiae I, q. 1, a. 5, ad 2).

The unity of sacred teaching as a discipline of learning lies precisely in this aspect that distinguishes it from philosophy, even religious philosophy, namely, being revealed by God rather than discovered by the light of human reason.

Quia igitur Sacra Scriptura considerat aliqua secundum quod sunt divinitus revelata...omnia quae cumque sunt divinitus revelabilia, communicant in una ratione formalis objecti huius scientiae. Et ideo comprehenduntur sub sacra doctrina sicut sub scientia una (Summa Theologiae I, q. 1, a. 3, c.).

II

Sacred Teaching and Scripture

The formal aspect that unites sacred teaching is not only “revealed by God” in the abstract, but “revealed by God in Scripture.”

Prophetis etiam et apostolis credimus...Successoribus autem eorum non credimus nisi in quantum nobis annuntiant ea quae credimus...Successoribus autem ille in scriptis reliquierunt (Disputed Questions on Truth q. 14, a. 10, ad 11).

...sola canonica Scriptura est regula fidei. Alii autem sic edisserunt de veritate, quod nolunt sibi credi nisi in quae vera dicunt (Commentary on the Gospel of John, 21, 1, 6, n. 2656).

What St. Thomas has in mind in these texts is clearly not a biblicism that limits itself to the repetition of words contained in Scripture, but a discipline of learning that begins to unfold the wealth contained in the sacred texts.

Si igitur principia ex quibus procedit haec doctrina sunt ea quae per revelationem Spiritus Sancti sunt accepta et in sacris Scripturis tradita, consequens est quod in hac doctrina non alia tradantur quam ea quae in sacris Scripturis habentur. Hoc est ergo quod concludit, quod nullo modo aliquid debet audere dicere “praeter ea quae nobis divinitus ex sanctis eloquiis sunt expressa,” idest, exprimatur per sancta eloquia. Signanter autem non dicit: in sanctis eloquiis, sed “ex sanctis eloquiis,” quia quae cumque ex his quae continentur in sacra Scriptura elici possunt, non sunt aliena ab hac doctrina, licet ipsa etiam in sacra non continentur Scriptura (Commentary on Denys the Areopagite, De Divinis Nominibus, I, 1. 1, n. 11) [text following Ulrich Horst, Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift 13 (1962) 166 with note 42].

Since the starting-points from which this teaching goes forward are those things that are received by the Holy Spirit’s revelation and handed on in the sacred Scriptures, it follows that this teaching does not hand on anything except what is found in the sacred Scriptures. And so he [Denys the Areopagite] concludes that in no way should anyone dare to say anything “except what has been divinely expressed to us out of the holy sayings,” that is, expressed by the holy sayings. It is significant, however, that he does not say, “in the holy sayings,” but “out of the holy sayings,” because whatever can be drawn from what is contained in sacred Scripture is not foreign to this teaching, even if it itself is not contained in sacred Scripture.
The primary avenue for unfolding the Scriptures is found, according to St. Thomas, in the writings of the Fathers. In fact, he occasionally calls these writings “sacred scripture(s)” without equating them with the Sacred Scriptures *par excellence*. One of the *Quodlibetal Questions* asks, “Whether everything written by the holy Fathers is from the Holy Spirit.” The argument “contra” suggests an answer in the affirmative:

**Contra**, ad eundem pertinet facere aliquid propter finem et perducere ad illum finem. Sed finis Scripturae, quae est a Spiritu Sancto, est eruditio hominum. Haec autem eruditio hominum ex Scripturis non potest esse nisi per expositiones Sanctorum. Ergo expositiones Sanctorum sunt a Spiritu Sancto (*Quodlibetal Questions* 12, q. 17, sed contra).

The body of the article seems to confirm this impression:

**Respondeo.** Dicendum quod ab eodem Spiritu Scripturae sunt exposita et editae...et prae- cipue quantum ad ea quae sunt fidei, quia fides est donum Dei; et ideo interpretatio sermonum numeratur inter alia dona Spiritus Sancti (*Quodlibetal Questions* 12, q. 17, c).

Yet the answer to the first objection makes a distinction that safeguards the uniqueness of Sacred Scripture as the one rule of faith. The first objection had argued that statements of the Fathers on occasion contradict each other, which cannot possibly be from the Holy Spirit. The response to the objection qualifies the inspiration of the Fathers as a special charism which all true interpreters share to some degree and on some occasions. By contrast, the inspiration of Scripture is more stable.

**Ad primum ergo dicendum** quod gratiae gratis datae sunt habitus, sed sunt quidam motus a Spiritu Sancto... et ideo de aliquibus occultis revelandis, aliquando tangitur mens a Spiritu Sancto et aliquando non....

...dicta expositorum necessitatem non inducunt quod nesse sit eis credere, sed solum Scriptura canonica, quae in veteri et in novo testamento est (*Quodlibetal Questions* 12, q. 17, ad 1).

To the first point: Charisms are not permanent dispositions, but they are a movement from the Holy Spirit... and thus with regard to the revelation of hidden things, at times the mind is touched by the Holy Spirit and at times not... the sayings of the interpreters do not involve necessity so that it would be necessary to believe them. This is true only of the canonical Scripture which consists of the Old and New Testament.

The Fathers are thus in one way necessary and in another not: they are necessary because they open the Scriptures as readers who share in the same Spirit that speaks through the Scriptures. Yet, particular interpretations cannot automatically compel assent by the mere fact that they are Augustine’s or Gregory of Nyssa’s, because Augustine and Gregory of Nyssa have the gift of interpretation only in the manner of a charism, not of permanent inspiration.

In sum, sacred teaching is related in essentially different ways to different kinds of texts. When it appeals to authoritative philosophical texts, it does not appeal to its proper ground, but to something outside itself. As in philosophy itself, such appeal has only probable force (though the philosophical arguments themselves may be more than probable). When it appeals to Scripture, sacred teaching appeals to its proper ground and its appeal has the force of necessity.

When it appeals to the writings of the Fathers, it appeals to its proper ground, but its appeal has only probable force (again
the arguments of the Fathers themselves may be more than probable).

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...sacra doctrina huissmodi autoritatis utitur quasi Ex-tranenses argumentis, et probabilibus.

Auctoritatis autem canonicae Scripturae utitur PROPIE, ex necessitate argumentando.

But it uses texts of the canonical Scripture PROPERLY arguing from necessity.

For our faith rests upon the revelation entrusted to the apostles and prophets who wrote the canonical books not on another revelation—if any was made to other teachers.

III

The Fourfold Sense of Scripture and Christ

In his inaugural lecture as Baccalarius Biblicus in Paris (De Commendatione et Partitione Sacrae Scripturae), St. Thomas offers the following outline of Scripture to guide his hearers through the complex labyrinth of texts.

Scripture Leads to Eternal Life:

(i) By giving commandments (praecipiendo): Old Testament

(A) Commandments of the King who can punish: the Law

(I) Private law given to an individual or a family .......... Genesis
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(i) Justice ........................................1-2 Chron
(ii) Temperance ................................. Judith
(iii) Courage
(a) In attacking .............................. 1-2 Maccabees
(b) In enduring suffering ................... Tobit
(iv) Prudence
(a) In repelling insidious attacks ........ Esdras
(b) In repelling violence ................. Esth e r

(II) By words
(a) Asking for the gift of wisdom; instruction in wisdom through prayer to God ........ Psalms
(b) Teaching wisdom, according to the two tasks of the wise person
(i) Exposing liars ............................... Job
(ii) Saying what is true
(a) Wisdom is commended ................. Wisdom
(b) The precepts of wisdom are proposed in “the three books of Solomon”
   • First degree of virtue: political virtue and the proper use of the world .......... Proverbs
   • Second degree of virtue: purifying virtues, leading to contempt of the world . . Ecclesiastes
   • Third degree of virtue: virtues of the purified soul: delight in wisdom alone . . .Canticle

[III] By words and deeds together (ends in praise of the fathers of the people) .......... Sirach]

(2) BY HELPING (adiu wando) THROUGH THE GIFT OF GRACE: NEW TESTAMENT

(A) The origin of grace
(I) Christ’s human nature emphasized
(a) Christ’s dignity as King:
   (a) Mystery of the INCARNATION Man ........ Matthew
   (b) Christ’s dignity as Prophet:
   (b) Victory of the RESURRECTION Lion ...... Mark

(c) Christ’s dignity as Priest
(c) Mystery of the passion Ox ............. Luke
(II) Christ’s divine nature emphasized
(d) The heights of divinity Eagle .......... John
(B) The power of grace ......................... Paul
(C) The power of grace works itself out
(I) In the beginning of the Church ............ Acts
(II) In apostolic instruction ordered to the growth of the Church ................. Canonical Letters

(III) In the Church’s fulfillment: the bride joins the wedding-banquet of the bridegroom: eternal life ........ Revelation

The overall intention of Scripture, according to this outline, is to lead to eternal life. The Old Testament leads to life by giving the law, summarized in the love of God and neighbor. The New Testament leads to life by pointing to the gift of grace. Both Testaments have a three-step rhythm of increasing fulfillment. The Old Testament begins with the law of love promulgated by the King who can threaten punishment (Pentateuch). It continues with the king’s emissaries, the prophets, who exhort the people to follow the law of love (Joshua to the minor prophets). And it culminates in God’s fatherly education of his people in the ways of love. The high-point of this third part is found in the Song of Songs. The New Testament begins with an account of the origin of grace in the life and suffering of Jesus (Gospels). It continues with Paul, the emissary or apostle par excellence, who unfolds the power of grace. And it culminates in the texts that show how the power of grace is consummated. The high-point of this third part is found in the wedding feast of the Lamb (Revelation to John 21–22).

A single principle shapes both of these structural levels, namely, God’s providence leading along a path to life from promise to fulfillment. This principle is clearest in the correspondence between the theological high-points of the two Testaments, namely, the Song of Songs and the wedding feast of the Lamb (Revelation to John 21–22). The Song of Songs, the song of love
par excellence, points ahead to the consummation of all love in the wedding of the Lamb (Revelation to John 21-22). It is at this point, the central point of biblical theology, that one can understand why the multiple senses of Scripture (literal and spiritual) are so important to St. Thomas. Scripture speaks not merely as a text (literal sense) but, inasmuch as the final plans of God’s providence are revealed in it, it opens up God’s speech through things themselves. The sense of the text (literal sense) remains the foundation, but God’s revelation carries further, making use of what the text signifies to signify something further.

It is important to be clear on the distinction between literal and spiritual. The spiritual senses are not indirect textual senses such as metaphor or allegory. All forms of speech, from “literal” speech to metaphorical and allegorical speech, are textual senses and thus belong to the literal or historical sense. In the statement, “The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm” (Deuteronomy 26, 8), the metaphors of hand and arm are used to refer to God’s power. The text’s literal sense is, therefore, the reference to God’s power (Summa Theologiae I q. I, a. ro, ad 3), not the “literal” reference to some hand and arm. Daniel uses complex allegories to signify kingdoms. Beasts appear, each of which signifies a distinct kingdom or king. The literal or historical sense, as St. Thomas understands it, is not the appearing of beasts, but the appearing of kingdoms and kings.

Hircus, vel alia huiusmodi, per quae aliae personae a Christo in Scripturis designantur, non fuerunt res aliquae, sed similitudines imaginariae, ad hoc solum ostensae, ut illae personae significarentur; unde illa significatio qua per illas similitudines personae illae, aut regna designantur, non pertinet nisi ad historicum sensum.

A he-goat or other [figures] of this kind, by which persons other than Christ are pointed at in the Scriptures were not things but imaginary likenesses shown only for this purpose, namely, to signify those persons. Therefore, the signification by which persons or kingdoms are pointed out by those similitudes belongs exclusively to the historical sense.

The allegorical, moral and anagogic senses of Scripture, understood as spiritual senses, differ, therefore, from all literary devices including metaphor and allegory in being senses, not of words, but of things signified by words.

Sic enim dictum est, sacra Scriptura veritatem quam tradit, dupliciter manifestat: per verba, et per rerum figuris.

As said above, it is in two ways that sacred Scripture manifests the truth which it passes on, namely through words and through figures [that consist] of things.

The manifestation through words results in the historical or literal sense. For this reason, whatever is rightly taken from the signification of the words belongs to the literal sense.

However, if one finds in some other text that Christ is signified by imaginary likenesses, this sort of signification does not go beyond the literal sense. It is in this way that Christ is signified by “the stone which was cut out, not by human hands…” (Dan 2, 34).

Now, even things that happened in truth are ordered to pointing at Christ as a shadow to the truth; and therefore, this sort of signification, in which Christ or his members are signified by things, results in another sense besides the historical, namely, the allegorical.
quod quaedam res per figuram aliarum rerum exprimuntur, quia visibilia solent esse figurae invisibilium, ut Dionysius dicit. Inde est quod sensus iste qui ex figuris accipitur, spiritualis vocatur.

Veritas autem quam sacra scriptura per figuras rerum tradit, ad duo ordinatur: scilicet ad recte credendum et ad recte operandum.

(1) Si ad recte operandum; sic est sensus moralis, qui alio nomine tropologicus dicitur.

(2) Si autem ad recte credendum, oportet distinguere secundum ordinem credibilium; ut enim Dionysius dicit (Cael. Hier., IV), status Ecclesiae medius est inter statum Synagogae, et statum Ecclesiae triumphantis. Vetus autem testamentum figura fuit novi: vetus simul et novum figura sunt caelestium.

(2-a) Sensus ergo spiritualis, ordinatus ad recte credendum, potest fundari in illo modo figurationis quo vetus testamentum figurat novum: et sic est allegoricus sensus vel typicus, secundum quod ea quae in veteri testamento contigerunt, exponuntur de Christo et Ecclesia.

(2-b) Vel potest fundari in illo modo figurationis quo novum simul et vetus significant Ecclesiæ triumphantem; et sic est sensus anagogicus (Quodlibetal Questions 7, q. 6, a. 2, c).

In this understanding, spiritual senses are something found only in Scripture: only in a text which is the word of God can words lead to a signification found beyond themselves in things, because only God, in whose providence all things are held together and ordered to one goal, can speak through things.

Once one sees the spiritual senses as rooted in God’s providence, one can understand why Jesus is always implied in them. As St. Thomas puts it in a text already quoted above “even things that happened in truth [i.e., not only words, but things signified by words] are ordered to pointing at Christ, as a shadow is ordered to the truth; and therefore, this sort of signification, in which Christ or his members are signified by things, results in another sense besides the historical, namely, the allegorical” (Quodlibetal Questions 7, q. 6, a. 2, ad 1).

Given the manner in which they are rooted in God’s providence, the spiritual senses are not an automatic schema that applies to everything spoken of in Scripture.

To the Fifth: These four senses are not attributed to Scripture such that every part of Scripture must be interpreted by reference to those four senses, but in some places by reference to those four, in some by three, in some by two and in some by only one.
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**The Principle for Determining the Number of Senses**

In sacra enim Scriptura praecipue ex prioribus posteriora significantur; et ideo quandoque in sacra Scriptura secundum sensum litteralem dicitur aliquid de priori quod potest spiritualiter de posterioribus exponi, sed non convertitur.

**Four Senses: The Old Testament**

Inter omnia autem quae in sacra Scriptura narrantur, prima sunt illa quae ad vetus testamentum pertinent; et ideo quae secundum litteralem sensum ad facta veteris testamenti spectant, possunt quatuor sensibus exponi.

**Four Senses: Christ**

Secunda vero sunt illa quae pertinent ad statum praesentis Ecclesiae, in quibus
(1) illa sunt priora quae ad caput pertinent, respectu eorum quae pertinent ad membra;
(2) quia ipsum corpus verum Christi, et ea quae in ipso sunt gesta, sunt figura corporis Christi mystici, et eorum quae in ipso geruntur,
(3) ut in ipso, scilicet Christo, exemplum vivendi sumere de-beamus.

**Four Senses: The Church**

Sed quando secundum litteralem sensum dicitur aliquid de Ecclesia, secundum litteralem sensum ad facta veteris testamenti spectant, possunt tamen exponi moraliter et anagogice.

**Two Senses: Moral Instruction**

Ea vero quae moraliter dicitur secundum sensum litteralem, non consueverunt exponi nisi allegorice.

**One Sense: Glory**

Illa vero quae secundum sensum litteralem pertinent ad statum gloriae, nullo ali o sensu con-
One can observe in this text that Jesus stands both in the middle and at the end of the spiritual senses. He stands in the middle, announced by the history that precedes him and announcing the history that comes after him. And he stands at the end as the one in whom all things are consummated. In this way a reference to Jesus is an essential feature of every spiritual sense. For this reason St. Thomas can call Scripture “the heart of Christ” both in the sense that it manifests this heart and in the sense that the meaning of its words and the meaning of things is disclosed by that heart.

CONCLUSION: THE FIVE WAYS AS A TEST-CASE

If theology, according to St. Thomas, occupies itself with the inexhaustible rivers of God's revelation poured from the pierced side of Jesus, if the one rule of theology is Scripture, and if Scripture in its four senses has Christ at its center and end, one is led to adopt a particular approach to the Summa Theologiae.

1. One is led to see the Summa as standing essentially in the service of Scripture, as a particular pedagogical way of lending voice to Scripture.

2. Since Scripture “manifests the heart of Christ” one is led to expect that the Summa Theologiae is not a systematic text in a sense akin to a geometric demonstration where one proceeds from foundations to what is implicit in those foundations. One is led to expect that breaking pieces of a system from the Summa Theologiae as “treatises” intelligible in themselves will not do it justice. One is led to expect that its parts are designed to interlock, to open up more and more what remains inexhaustible, namely, the rivers of the Trinity flowing from the side of Christ into the world, as mediated by the word of Scripture.

3. The “five ways” of demonstrating God’s existence from effects can serve as a test-case for the proposed approach to the Summa. Given St. Thomas's explicit discussion of the relation between Scripture and philosophical arguments shortly before the five ways are introduced (“This science [=theology] can take something from various kinds of philosophical learning, not because it needs them by necessity, but to make that which is passed on in this science more manifest”) (Summa Theologiae, I, q. 1, a. 5, ad 2), one is led to understand Exodus 3,14 cited in the same article (Summa Theologiae, I q. 2, a. 3, sed contra), as the pre-given revelation which the five ways are intended to “make more manifest.” As philosophical arguments developed in a theological text, the five ways are judged correctly to the degree in which they are judged, not as foundations of the theological enterprise, but as subservient parts, subservient to the larger whole of God’s self-revelation.

In his commentary on John, St. Thomas argues that Jesus's statements, “Unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins” (John 8,24) and “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am” (John 8,28), make use of Exodus 3,14 and show its fulfillment. God in the flesh, who repeats the original words of divine self-revelation “I am,” proves himself as the God of the covenant by dying in the flesh and by offering the hope of salvation in his own blood (Commentary on John, 8,24,28, nn. 1179; 1191). Since Exodus 3,14 prefigures John 8,24,28 and is fulfilled in it, it would be a mistake to consider the Exodus quote with its auxiliaries, the five ways, in isolation from the discussion of the Son's incarnation and passion in the Tertia Pars.

This point is confirmed by St. Thomas's division of the Summa into three parts (Summa Theologiae, I q. 2, prologue): God and the flowing of creatures from God; the movement of rational creatures into God; Christ who through his incarnation is the way to reach God. These three parts focus on aspects of one and the same process. It is the flowing of rational creatures from their origin that imparts to them the longing for that origin. It is not surprising, then, that the prologue to the Prima Secundae begins with a brief recapitulation of the movement discussed in the Prima Pars, the procession of God's image from its exemplar...
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(Ia IIae, prol.). The Prima Secundae and Secunda Secundae look at the flowing of the image from its exemplar from the other side, from the side of the image's longing and effective tendency toward its exemplar. The Tertia Pars, finally, speaks of Christ as the way. This division suggests that the Summa's three parts are best read as distinct perspectives on a whole which must be kept in view from the very beginning.

NOTES

1 Ceslas Spicq, *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, 15.695.
3 “Aut enim sacra scriptura dicitur canon bibliae, aut dicta sanctorum patrum. [The term] ‘sacred Scripture’ refers either to the canon of the Bible or to the sayings of the Fathers” (Sent. I, d. 33, a. 5, obj. 3).