SACRAMENTS OF THE INCARNATE WORD:
THE CHRISTOLOGICAL FORM OF THE SUMMA THEOLOGIAE

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By taking Christ as Word as its focus, the present study aims to elucidate the most basic theological and rhetorical structure of Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa theologiae*, without which claims of christological centrality in the work as a whole remain intuitive and gestural at best. Two, principal theses order the procedure. First, Aquinas identifies Jesus Christ as Word in the *prima pars* in a series of questions on the Trinity that consolidate and elaborate his earlier claim in the first question that God is the “subject” of the science of sacred doctrine. To speak of the Word is always to have invoked the other divine persons as well; and all that “theology” has to say about creation, the moral life, and redemption proceeds from this singular origin and condition of the discipline: “the word of God” (*sermo de Deo*), in the mode of revelation. Second, therefore, interpretations of the *Summa* that emphasize the diffusion of Christology throughout the work must come to grips with Aquinas’s articulated preference for the name *Word* for the second person of the Trinity. This decision invites a constancy of association of wisdom, for instance, with the Incarnation and passion of the Word, who may be experienced by
the faithful. The sapiential character of sacred doctrine subsists in this exemplary Word because the words of Scripture, reasoned arguments, and sacramental words are all ordered by his perfect utterance: a curriculum of holiness unto salvation.

Chapter one introduces the argument and methodology of the dissertation, and reviews important secondary literature on the topic. Chapter two develops the argument by rereading the first question of the Summa with special attention to Thomas’s use of the letters of St Paul—I Corinthians in particular—and his dependence upon (Pseudo-) Dionysius as a theological exemplar of the proposed “study and suffering of divine things.” In this perspective, the trinitarian anthropology of the prima pars (chapter three) may be seen to frame the ascetical economy of virtue and gift of the prima secunda and secunda secundae (chapter four); and the tertia pars elaborates the christological and sacramental condition of discipleship, first in terms of the salvific purpose of the Incarnation and all that the Word did and suffered (chapter five), and then in terms of God’s provision of sacraments under the sign of the Word as means to the end of human sanctification (chapter six), preeminently in the Eucharist (chapter seven). Chapter eight draws several consequences of the foregoing for scholarly discussion of the “plan” of the Summa and the character of reason in Aquinas’s mature thought.
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CHAPTER 1:
BROACHING THE WORD OF THE SUMMA

I. Focus of the dissertation

“The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account” (Heb 4.12-13).1

Commenting on this text, Aquinas notes first that the Vulgate misleadingly renders word as “sermo.” The Greek logos is properly translated verbum, as Augustine recognized when commenting on John 12.48: “The sermo that I have spoken,” that is, Thomas clarifies, “I myself who am the Verbum.” That God is himself Verbum thus introduces a christological cast to the sermo Dei of Scripture. Wisdom 18.15, for instance, is an apparently incarnational text: “Your almighty sermo, Lord, leapt down

1 Scripture and Aquinas both apply a varying pattern of pronouns to the Word, by turns personal (“him,” “his,” “who,” etc.) and impersonal (“it,” “its,” “which,” etc.), even within the same pericope, as in the instance of Hebrews 4. Rather than regularizing them, therefore, I move back and forth according to the pattern of whatever text is before me.
from heaven from your royal throne.” And the *sermo* of Hebrews should be understood similarly as “the living *Verbum* of God.”

If God’s word is living and active, this should transform our understanding of the human word, including the *logos* or “account” that we must render to God (Heb 4.13).

“For the Word of God conceived from eternity in the paternal intellect is the primordial word, of which Sirach 1.5 speaks: ‘The word of God on high is the fountain of wisdom.’”

This means, Thomas reflects, that from the Word are “derived all other words, which are nothing other than certain conceptions expressed in the mind of an angel or in our mind.”

That is, inverting the order of Hebrews 4.12: (i) all words are derived from the Word as a reflection of its activity in expressing them, (ii) according to the pattern of its own, original conception. Each attribute may be taken in turn.

(i) The Word is called *active* or “effectual” (*efficax*) on account of its “power,” which is seen first of all in creation: “through it all things were made, as it says in John 1.3, and again, Psalm 32.6: ‘By the word of the Lord the heavens were established.’”

Second, in terms of divine communication, “all words coming forth from God, by the

\[\text{\textit{In Heb 4.12, n. 217: “Dicet ergo vivus est sermo Dei. Ista littera de se videtur habere
difficultatem, tamen considerando aliam translationem, planitor est. Ubi enim nos habemus sermo, in
Graeco habetur logos, quod est idem quod verbum. Unde sermo, id est, verbum. Et sic etiam exponit
Augustinus illud Jn 12: sermo quem locatus sum, id est, ego ipse qui sum verbum. Wis 18.15: omnipotens
sermo tuus, domine, exiliens de caelo a regalibus sedibus venit. Et similiter hic sermo Dei est vivus, id est,
verbum Dei vivum.”}}\]

\[\text{\textit{In Heb 4.13, n. 231: “Ad istum ergo est nobis sermo, ut scilicet reddamus rationem de
operibus nostris. II Cor 5.10: omnes nos manifestari oportet ante tribunal Christi, ut referat unusquisque
propria corporis prout gessit, sive bonum, sive malum sit.”}}\]

\[\text{\textit{In Heb 4.12, n. 217: “Verbum enim Dei ab aeterno conceptum, in paterno intellectu est verbum
primordiale, de quo Sir 1.5 dicitur: fons sapientiae verbum Dei in excelsis. Et quia est primordiale, ideo ab
ipso derivantur omnia alia verba, quae nihil aliud sunt quam quaedam conceptiones expressae in mente
Angeli, vel nostra. Unde illud verbum est expressio omnium verborum, quasi fons quidam.”}}\]
mediation of angel or man, have efficacy” on account of the Word, according to Sirach 8.4: “his word is full of power,” and again, Isaiah 55.11: “So will my word be, which will go forth from my mouth: it will not return to me empty, but will accomplish whatsoever I have determined, and will prosper in that for which I sent it.”

(ii) Because, however, the Word of God and all other words are not identical—as, for instance, the act of creation is not the same as the mediating witness of the prophet—their relation is analogous or “similar,” following on the living nature of God’s first word. The “word” of Hebrews 4.12 should accordingly be understood in several ways that mount or are compounded from a singular point of origin. First of all, the word “is called living as it has its own motion and operation,” just as “a fountain gushing forth...,

perpetually vigorous.” This is the person of the Word of God to which the psalmist adverts: “For ever, O Lord, your word stands firm in heaven” (118.89), and again, John 5.26: “just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.” Second, the word in question may “be referred to Christ’s human nature,” which “is living...; because since he rose again he dies now no more,” according to his own statement at Revelation 1.18: “behold I am living forever.” Third, the word of Hebrews may be taken as “the word of Scripture,” which is “living and unfailing” according to Romans 9.6: “It is not as though the word of God had failed.”

5 Ibid., n. 218: “Consequenter cum dicit et efficax, ostendit eius potestatem.... Per ipsum enim facta sunt omnia Jn 1.3, et Ps 32.6: verbo domini caeli firmati sunt. Item est efficax quia ex ipso omnia verba prolata a Deo, mediante Angelo vel homine, efficaciam habent. Sir 8.4: sermo illius potestatem plenus est. Is 55.11: verbum quod egredietur de ore meo, non revertetur ad me vacuam, sed faciet quodcumque volui, et cetera.” Cf. In Col 1.25, n. 65.

finally, the words of commentary or elaboration upon Scripture, by the Church or in the
discipline of theology, represent a fourth stage in the cascade of language, the words
“which are said of that Word” that are “in a certain manner accommodated to other
words, according to their own mode.”

It is the principal contention of the present study that the whole of the Summa
theologiae may be read as an organization of and contribution to the foregoing fountain
of living language in its several stages, to the end of encouraging beginning students in
theology to learn about and experience God.

ST I 1 frames the argument of the whole: that Christian doctrine comprehends
intellectual and affective aspects because both are necessary for human salvation (ch. 2).
For this reason, the anthropology of the prima pars—human beings as bearers of the
image of God—is founded in a trinitarian theology of the Word spoken by the Father in

perpetuum vigorem. Ps 118.89: in aeternum, domine, verbum tuum permanet in caelo. In 5.26: sicut enim
pater habet vitam in semetips, sic dedit et filio vitam habere in semetips. Vel potest referri ad humanam
naturam. Est enim vivus, licet ab aliis reputetur mortuus, quia cum resurrexit, iam non moritur. Rev 1.18:
fui mortuus, et ecce sum vivens in saecula saeculorum. Similiter etiam sermo Scripturae est vivus et
indeficiens. Rom 9.6: non autem quod exciderit verbum Dei.”

Ibid., in a sentence immediately preceding the text quoted in the previous note: “Et illa, quae
dicuntur de illo verbo, quodammodo aptantur ad alia verba, secundum suum modum.”

On the intended audience of the Summa, I follow Leonard E. Boyle, “The Setting of the Summa
Theologiae of Saint Thomas” (1982), repub. in idem., Facing History: A Different Thomas Aquinas, with
an Introduction by J.-P. Torrell (Textes et études du moyen âge 13; Louvain-La-Neuve, 2000), and
appropriations of Boyle by Mark D. Jordan and Joseph Wawrykow. See Jordan, “The Summa of Theology
as Moral Formation,” Rewritten Theology: Aquinas after His Readers (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 118
and 120, and Wawrykow, “Wisdom in the Christology of Thomas Aquinas,” Christ among the Medieval
Dominicans: Representations of Christ in the Texts and Images of the Order of Preachers, ed. Kent Emery,
Jr. and Joseph Wawrykow (Notre Dame: UNDP, 1998), pp. 177, 180, and 192 note 7. For a different view
of the intended audiences of the Summa, namely, “a student pursuing a degree in theology, ...one aspiring
to be a Magister in sacra pagina, or... someone at a comparable level,” see John I. Jenkins, Knowledge and
Love (ch. 3); the *prima secunda* and *secunda secundae* articulate an ascetical economy of virtue and gift as necessary steps along the path of obedience to God in Christ (ch. 4); and the *tertia pars* elaborates the christological and sacramental condition of discipleship, first in terms of the salvific purpose of the Incarnation and all that the Word did and suffered (questions 1-59, treated in ch. 5), and then in terms of God’s provision of sacraments under the sign of the Word as means to the end of human sanctification (questions 60-72, treated in ch. 6), preeminently in the Eucharist, through which the faithful are perfectly united to the Word in his passion (questions 73-83, treated in ch. 7).

Such an approach to Thomas’s Christology fills a gap in recent scholarly discussions by drawing attention to the constancy of the person of the Word in the *Summa* as a whole, the Word who is the ascetical pattern or form of God’s pedagogy, incarnate and crucified.\(^9\) I attempt to show this in a preliminary way for the remainder of the present chapter by surveying some secondary literature on (i) Word in Aquinas and (ii) the place and purpose of his Christology within the structure of the *Summa*.

Throughout the study I test and extend the depth of the *Summa*’s scriptural reasoning by attending to the roughly contemporaneous *lectura* on St Paul (and occasionally the *lectura* on St Matthew and St John), allowing the several works to interpret one another mutually. “The *Summa* is a manual, which contains only what is strictly necessary,” as Jean-Pierre Torrell has observed. Thus, the “courses on the Bible

\(^9\) *Ascetical*, that is, in the standard sense of “pertaining to, or treating of, the spiritual exercises by which perfection and virtue may be attained” (*Oxford English Dictionary*).
generally testify to a more ample perspective.” Thomas’s early *Scriptum* on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard similarly provides a more ample historical perspective. For this reason I occasionally bolster the interpretation of the *Summa*’s scripturalism with reference to continuities and discontinuities with the *Scriptum*, as well.

II. State of the question (i): The christological end of Paissac’s *Théologie du Verbe*

In a 1993 essay on Aquinas’s teaching about the Word as one aspect of his trinitarian theology throughout his career, A. F. von Gunten suggested that “in the mature works, especially the *Summa theologiae*, the name ‘Word’ plays a principal role in the enumerated functions of theology,” functions such as “illustration, manifestation, refutation of errors, and exposition of the order of doctrine and of the discipline.” The

10 Torrell, *STA* II, p. 330. Cf. the helpful comment by Thomas Prügl in “Thomas Aquinas as Interpreter of Scripture,” *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Rik Van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow (Notre Dame: UNDP, 2005): “Thomist theology and its theological exegesis are not fixed on dogmatics or individual dogmas; they breathe rather the vastness of Revelation in its entirety. The difference between a ‘systematic’ *Summa* and an ‘exegetical’ commentary is therefore modest. Both aim at the ‘manifestation of truth,’ and both deal with the rational understanding, order, and permeation of the revealed word. The ‘advantage of the *Summa* lies in the fact that its endeavors are not tied to the continuous text of a biblical book; its topics are instead ‘freely’ arranged according to the requirements of the theological discipline (secundum ordinem [disciplinae], non secundum quod requirebat librorum expositio [ST prologue]). On the other hand, the commentary possesses the advantage of being able to uncover within the biblical text ‘more’ than is necessary for the systematic description of a theological subject. What this means is that, depending on opportunity, Aquinas’ interpretation of the Scriptures occasionally puts more effort into a theological subject in an attempt to do justice to the spiritual or affective dimension of Scripture than is the case with the exclusively argumentative method of the *quaeestiones disputatae* or the *Summae*” (pp. 403-04). Torrell judges that the “Lectura super Ioannem can be dated with reasonable certainty to the second period of teaching in Paris, probably during the years 1270-72,” making it contemporaneous with the composition of the *tertia pars* which was “probably begun in Paris at the end of the winter 1271-72” (*STA* I, pp. 333, 339). The commentary on Matthew was probably written during the academic year 1269-70 (*STA* I, p. 339). On probable dates for the composition of the courses on St Paul, see ch. 2, note 97, below.

11 Von Gunten, “*In principio erat verbum*: Une évolution de saint Thomas en théologie trinitaire,” *Ordo sapientiae et amoris. Image et message de saint Thomas d’Aquin à travers les récentes études historiques, herménéutiques et doctrinales*, ed. C.-J. Pinto de Oliveira (Studia friburgensia n. s. 78;
point is interesting because it signals the possibility that Word may be a unifying theme or pattern in the Summa beyond the seemingly limited handling of the matter in question 27 and following of the prima pars. “Word of God” might at once name a person of the Trinity and comprehend a larger theological program, setting the stage for, and then enabling, a whole host of pedagogical, argumentative, and catechetical tasks.

Von Gunten’s suggestion is correct, as the present study will demonstrate. And he rightly based his argument in part on the research of Hyacinthe Paissac, whose landmark Théologie du Verbe: Saint Augustin et saint Thomas has, since its appearance in 1951, stood at the threshold of all study of Word in Aquinas.12 Paissac showed that by the time of the Summa, Thomas had, under the influence of Augustine, come to understand the human intellectual process in terms of a verbum mentis or verbum cordis analogous to the eternal generation of the Word; and on this account Thomas came to prefer “Word” as a personal (and not essential) name for the second person of the Trinity.13 It seems clear

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13 See I 27, 1; I 32, 1 ad 2; I 34, 1 and 3. The influence of Augustine’s De trinitate may especially be seen in questions 34-35 on the Word and the Image. Paissac arrives at his conclusion first of all by tracing the development of Thomas’s thought about human knowledge. By the time of the Summa (e.g., at I 85, 2 ad 3, an important text for Paissac; and again, I 45, 2 ad 3), “saint Augustin, maintenant, aux yeux de saint Thomas, a raison. Ce n’est plus seulement son autorité qui impressionne; le bien-fondé de ses affirmations est manifeste. Si le verbe est vraiment ce qu’on vient de décrire, nulle réalité dans le monde
enough, according to this view, that human beings reflect God’s image intellectually, just
as the Word is the intellectual emanation or progeny of the Father.\textsuperscript{14} This therefore yields nativity or begottenness as the Son’s personal property, evoking his immaterial origin in the Father, consistent with God’s intellectual nature.\textsuperscript{15} “Son,” by contrast, while indicating that he is “of the same nature as the Father,”\textsuperscript{16} may, at a purely lexical level, be understood mistakenly in a material sense.\textsuperscript{17} In this way, Paissac notes, Thomas apparently aims to avoid the “grave heresies” of Arius and Sabellius, both of whom mistook what it means for the Son to proceed from the Father.\textsuperscript{18} As “God is above all things,” writes Thomas,

we should understand what is said of God not according to the mode of the lowest creatures, namely bodies, but from the similitude of the highest creatures, the intellectual substances; while even the similitudes derived from these fall short in the representation of divine objects. Procession, therefore, is not to be understood from what it is in bodies, either according to local movement or by way of a cause proceeding forth to its exterior effect, as, for instance, like heat from the agent to the thing made hot. Rather it is to be understood by way of an intelligible emanation, for example, of the intelligible word which proceeds from the speaker, yet remains in him. In that sense the Catholic Faith understands procession as existing in God.\textsuperscript{19}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{14} I 35 and 93.
\textsuperscript{15} I 34, 2; cf. I-II 93, 1 ad 2.
\textsuperscript{16} I 34, 2 ad 3; cf. I 42, 2 ad 1.
\textsuperscript{17} Théologie du Verbe, pp. 205, 216, 218ff.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p. 205; cf. I 27, 1 c.
\textsuperscript{19} I 27, 1 c. I will return to this basic argument of Aquinas in ch. 3 of the present study.
\end{flushleft}
Paissac’s account of the evolution of Thomas’s preference for “Word” was also constructive, as Paissac wished to defend the saint’s mature view of the “relation of the Word to creatures.” To this end, Paissac observes approvingly in the conclusion of his final chapter that the inscription of our minds in God via the exemplary, creative Word is for Thomas not just a fitting state of affairs (though it is also not a point of dogma per se) but a proper relationship, incorporating elements of likeness and difference in the manner of analogy. The intellectual likeness of human beings to God is non-equivocal as we are made in Christ’s image and non-univocal because our word is imperfect and accidental whereas God’s is substantial and subsistent. Of course, one may find the Augustinian tradition of so-called psychological reflection on the Trinity philosophically overburdened, needlessly abstract, and unduly intellectual, Paissac allowed. A virtue of the tradition, however, is its arrangement of several of the most fundamental claims of Scripture and the Church, including that the Word who is God, and “the Creator begotten,” was incarnated as the man Jesus, and that we are made in his image (see Col 1:15 and Heb 1.3). In this perspective, the challenge for any alternative theory of the relation between God and human beings is to order the relevant data of Scripture and faith in a comparably comprehensive manner.

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20 I 34, 3.
21 Théologie du Verbe, pp. 229-31, 235, citing I 32, 1 ad 2: “similitudo.”
22 See I 34, 3 ad 1.
23 See I 35, 2 c.
24 Théologie du Verbe, p. 219ff., esp. pp. 225-31. On image, see pp. 228-29. What seemed more likely to Paissac in 1951—with some prescience—than that theologians would carefully articulate alternative views to Augustine’s and Thomas’s on the divine-human relation was that they “pourront...,
For all his enthusiasm about the importance of *Word* in the *Summa*, however, Paissac never identified the Word as a theological foundation for the work as a whole, after whom Scripture, theological reflection, and the Christian life itself follow.\(^{25}\) Rather, Paissac limited himself to the “scientific” yield of Thomas’s retrieval of Augustine for philosophical reflection on human thought and language and the relations among the divine persons. For instance, Paissac took the movement from I 27, 1, describing the “intelligible emanation” of “the divine Word,” to I 27, 2, further specifying a “generation” of the Word—“and the Word himself proceeding is called the Son”—to indicate at once the chief intra-trinitarian and “almost phenomenological” dividend of Thomas’s preference for *Word* in the *Summa* (see again I 42, 2 ad 1).\(^{26}\) Thus, as Paissac wrote, in terms that evoke his methodology:

> si le souci du théologien est bien de rechercher, pour manifester le mystère, la synthèse la plus vigoureuse qui puisse satisfaire les exigences scientifiques, et s’il est difficile de trouver avec le nom de Fils un point de vue synthétique permettant de comprendre l’Esprit, tout au contraire le nom de Verbe donne lieu à une synthèse théologique parfaite. Car le verbe, en notre âme, est au principe de l’amour, et l’amour est le nom de l’Esprit. Ainsi dans l’acte intégral dont est capable un être humain—chose très simple: connaissance et amour—à la seule

\(^{25}\) See, e.g., *ibid.*, pp. 203-04, 225-27.

\(^{26}\) *Ibid.*, p. 233, especially in the second full paragraph, and also in the long paragraph on p. 234 (“presque phénoménologique”).

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sous l’influence de tel courant moderne, abandonner de trop difficiles spéculations sur le Verbe pour des explications plus séduisantes, et préférer les derniers résultats de la sociologie aux métaphysiques du passé. On parlera plus volontiers de la société divine, on évoquera le Fils sans souligner sa condition de pur relatif subsistant, on ne mentionnera plus le Verbe de Dieu en accordant au mot son sens exact. Mais l’instrument vieilli conservera sa valeur et sa force: on s’en servira de nouveau. Car un vieil instrument, même démodé, s’il est parfaitement adapté, si sa matière est à l’abri de toute atteinte, est préférable à l’outill plus récent mais peu solide et mal conçu; il suffit de savoir s’en servir et de ne pas être esclave de la mode” (p. 235).

condition que le verbe y réponde à la description précisée, se trouve manifesté le mystère intégral de la Trinité divine.27

Paissac correctly insisted that trinitarian reflection incorporates a certain anthropological research, given the analogy between divine and human knowing.28 More precisely, however, as is clear in ST I 1, the program of sacred doctrine joins two inquiries—philosophical research and theology—by appropriating “all things” to God, in an interested fashion, with the “end” of human salvation in view. The Summa thus undertakes to describe, frankly and boldly, the “way to God.”29 In this light, it is surprising that Paissac’s study of the trinitarian structures of Thomas’s thought and its development throughout his career culminates with central questions from the prima pars with no mention of the tertia, the whole of which is given to Jesus Christ as Word.30 Here most especially, in the concluding part of Aquinas’s great work, Paissac might have thought that the “place” of the Word—still occupying the “central” position that it did in the treatise on the Trinity near the beginning—affords a “point de vue d’où se peut

27 Ibid., p. 205. And he continues: “Il n’y a plus lieu de s’étonner si le Verbe, dans la Somme de théologie, est au centre même du Traité de la Trinité.”

28 Thus, as noted above, human epistemology serves as the point of departure for Paissac’s discussion of the Summa in the final chapter of Théologie du Verbe: “Si l’on veut bien comprendre la façon dont notre intelligence agit dans son acte de connaissance, il faut, à la suite d’Aristote, adopter la doctrine essentielle de l’abstraction” (p. 198). Likewise, his concluding thoughts (p. 232ff.) confirm that he viewed his research as primarily concerned with philosophical epistemology (on which, see further below).

29 I 1, 7 c and 2 prologue.

30 See, e.g., III 60 prologue, an important hermeneutical marker for the present study: “After considering those things that concern the mystery of the incarnate Word [in questions 1-59], we must consider the sacraments of the Church which derive their efficacy from the Word incarnate himself.” Cf. Liam G. Walsh, “Sacraments,” in The Theology of Thomas Aquinas, p. 327.
contempler avec le plus de joie l’ensemble de tout le mystère.” Instead, the conclusion of his final chapter is given, “après des siècles d’idéalisme,” to modern worries about the degree of “certitude” that Aquinas may have achieved in his doctrine about the Word in the *prima pars* and others of his “latest works.” Has Aquinas, for instance, here “proven” the reality of a Word in God, or is his position rather “hypothetical”? Under pressure of these questions, Paissac reaches for the via media of “*concordance*” and “*analogie*,” terms he thinks evoke less contingency than does “*convenance*” or fittingness (*convenientia*).

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31 *Théologie du Verbe*, pp. 205-06.

32 Ibid., p. 231.

33 Ibid., p. 207; cf. pp. 219-31. That the disciplinary horizon of Paissac’s research was primarily philosophical—albeit, he took himself to be practicing philosophy in sacred doctrine, via a sifting of St John’s “Word” as a way of thinking about human and divine knowledge—may also be shown by quoting the first paragraph of his “Conclusion,” at p. 232: “On vient de faire allusion à la nature de la théologie, à l’influence possible de l’idéalisme moderne [at p. 231, quoted above] sur la façon d’envisager les formules dogmatiques. De telles questions sont en dehors du travail entrepris. Mais on aura pu remarquer, au cours de ce travail, comment saint Thomas et saint Augustin comprennent leur rôle de théologien. Leurs longues et savantes analyses donnent parfois l’impression de se perdre en considérations philosophiques; l’un et l’autre utilisent les philosophes, et en particulier Aristote, sans paraître les redouter. On se tromperait pourtant en leur prêtant l’intention plus ou moins consciente d’introduire dans le domaine de la vérité révélée des concepts ou des schémes aristoteliciens. Ils cherchent à se ‘rendre compte’ de leur foi, selon une expression utilisée déjà par saint Basile: tel est pour eux l’essentiel de la théologie. Et ce ‘compte,’ cette ‘raison’ met en oeuvre nécessairement une élaboration rationelle de la vérité reconnue par l’homme. Ils se servent d’Aristote et des autres, dans la mesure où ils voient dans leurs intuitions fondamentales l’expression même de la vérité une conception abandonnée par la plupart des philosophes modernes. L’opposition fondamentale entre leur théologie et certaines tendances manifestées de nos jours, vient de là.” Similar to Paissac in terms of strict, logical focus is Gaston Rabeau, *Species. Verbum. L’activité intellectuelle élémentaire selon saint Thomas d’Aquin* (Bibliothèque thomiste 22; Paris: Vrin, 1938).

34 Ibid., p. 220ff.

35 Thus Paissac effectively prepared the way for Robert Richard’s 1963 dissertation on *The Problem of an Apologetical Perspective in the Trinitarian Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*, the immediate occasion for which was “the challenge of Dom Cyprian Vagaggini” in the latter’s essay, “La hantise des *rationes necessariae* de saint Anselme dans la théologie des processions trinitaires de saint Thomas,” translated into French for the *Spicilegium Beccense* volume (Paris: Vrin, 1959). In it, Richards wrestles valiantly, and with considerable philosophical and literary panache, with Vagaggini’s “challenge,” ordered in particular around the question of Thomas’s intentions—whether demonstrative in some qualified way, or rather explicative of that which is revealed—in his arguments for the procession of the Son and Holy Spirit,
Preoccupied with the philosophical and apologetic questions of his day, Paissac missed the opportunity to reflect further on the Word with Thomas in his own theological and scriptural idiom, diffused throughout the *Summa*. On this account, Paissac’s occasional appeals to “St John” and “Holy Scripture” rarely function as more than gestures of art. And his oblique prods to engagement of Thomas on “Christian participation in the pronunciation of the divine Word” come too late and do not begin to do justice to the fullness of Thomas’s teaching. As Paissac writes at the very end of his study:

la théologie du Verbe... permet de comprendre l’allusion de saint Jean de la Croix à la possibilité pour le chrétien de participer en quelque sorte à la prononciation du Verbe divin, dans l’acte ultime de contemplation infuse. Plus simplement elle aide à mieux apprécier la révélation apportée par saint Jean l’Évangéliste. Saint Thomas l’explique dans son *Commentaire sur le Symbole des Apôtres*....

before finally concluding that “it is difficult to conceive [of Thomas’s arguments] as the imitation of something [i.e. Anselm’s “rationes necessariae”] which takes, on every last significant turn, a precisely opposite direction.” For “the Thomist principle of the universal *verbum*... stands not as the *prius notum* in the knowledge of human experience, but as the *posterius notum* at the end of a process of theological understanding, in which knowledge of something already known, whose certitude was no longer in question—in this case, the procession of the Divine Word—was actually and necessarily presupposed” (all from p. 330).

36 Von Gunten recapitulates Paissac’s methodology in this respect, by focusing on Thomas’s “fruitful philosophical research” into “une image entre le monde créé et le monde incréé.” In this way, von Gunten hopes “pénétrer davantage la psychologie humaine de la connaissance” (“*In principio erat verbum,*” p. 141)—a useful exercise, perhaps, but one that is vulnerable to the charge of reducing Thomas’s theology of the Word to anthropological speculation under the sign of analogy, without reference to the claims, both substantive and structural, of Thomas’s Christology and sacramentology in the *Summa*. One recalls here M. D. Chenu’s exhortation to attend to “the objective breadth ... [of] the plan of Saint Thomas” as a guard against overemphasis on “the psychology of man and not on the work of God” (*Toward Understanding St. Thomas*, trans. with corrections and additions by A.-M. Landry and D. Hughes [Chicago: H. Regnery Co., 1964], p. 310).


And a long quotation follows from Thomas’s sermon on the second article of the
Apostle’s Creed, one of his last writings.39

It is odd that Paissac’s attention wandered here to a minor work of Thomas’s, and
only after mentioning John of the Cross. That he nonetheless finally hinted in the
direction of experience of God as a discursive interest of Aquinas, tied to his theology of
the Word, is significant. In the sermon in question, Thomas draws out the successive
stages of verbal expression ordered by the Word: that “all the words of God resemble this
Word,” whence we ought to hear and believe, allowing Christ to dwell in our hearts by
faith (see Eph 3.17). In turn, by meditating upon the Word that abides in us (see Psalm
119.11), we are able to manifest it by “preaching, counseling, and enkindling others,” as
St Paul recommends (see Eph 4.29, Col 3.16, and II Tim 4.2), which makes us “doers of
the word and not only hearers,” according to James 1.22.40

introduction to various critical aspects of the text in *The Sermon-Conferences of St. Thomas Aquinas on the

40 *Expositio in Symbolum Apostolorum*, art. 2: “Si ergo verbum Dei est filius Dei, et omnia Dei
verba sunt similitudo quaedam istius verbi; debemus primo libenter audire verba Dei.... Secundo debemus
credere verbis Dei, quia ex hoc verbum Dei habitat in nobis, idest Christus, qui est verbum Dei, apostolus,
Eph 3.17: *habitare Christum per fidem in cordibus vestris*.... Tertio oportet quod verbum Dei in nobis
manens continue meditemur....: Ps 119.11: *in corde meo abscondi eloquia tua, ut non peccem tibi*.... Quarto
oportet quod homo verbum Dei communicet aliis, commonendo, praedicando, et inflammando. Apostolus,
Eph 4.29: *omnis sermo malus ex ore vestro non procedat, sed si quis bonus ad aedificationem*. Idem, Col
3.16: *verbum Christi habitet in vobis abundanter, in omni sapientia, docentes et commonentes vosmetipsos*.
Idem, II Tim 4.2: *praedica verbum, insta opportune, importune, argue, obseca, increpa in omni patientia
et doctrina*. Ultimo verbum Dei debet executioni mandari. Jam 1.22: *estote factores verbi, et non auditores
tantum, fallentes vosmetipsos*.”
III. State of the question (ii): The beginning and end of Christology in the Summa

Scholars have increasingly recognized the orienting role of the *tertia pars* upon the whole: that Jesus Christ effectively functions as the formal and material *terminus ad quem* of every major argument. Jean-Marc Laporte, for instance, in a recent synthetic essay on scholarly discussion of the *Summa*’s structure, argues that the Christology of the *tertia pars* serves as “a point of convergence, a center, rather than an appendix awkwardly tacked on.” In making his case, Laporte capably knits together several strands of contemporary scholarship about the shape or “plan” of the *Summa* with more systematic analyses of *sacra doctrina* as an elaborate christological pedagogy. In terms of plan, that Thomas himself framed the *Summa* with a direct statement of his intention to organize the topics of the work in a pedagogically appropriate manner—according to the “order of the subject matter” (*ordinem disciplinae*)—serves as the standard proof of his self-consciousness in this regard. To ask about the nature of Thomas’s organizational decisions is, however, to begin to engage another order, observes Laporte, namely, the substantive process of discovery (*ordo inventionis*) initiated by the texts themselves, that

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42 Laporte, “Christ in Aquinas’s *Summa Theologiae*,” p. 231.

43 *ST* prologue.
would form the student of sacred doctrine by stepping her through a series of exercises to
a particular end.\footnote{Thomas uses the latter term at, e.g., \textit{De veritate} 10, 8 ad 10. Cf. ST III 9, 4 ad 1.}

The first \textit{ordo} thus stands in the service of the second, the structure or form
facilitating engagement with the subject matter. And Laporte rightly draws attention in
the latter regard to the constancy of Christ as himself the “guide” of the \textit{Summa}, “the \textit{via
veritatis}, the teacher \textit{par excellence}.”\footnote{Laporte, “Christ in Aquinas’s \textit{Summa
Theologiae},” p. 243.} After teaching “the Jews of his day,” writes
Laporte, Jesus

entrusts the task of teaching the Gentiles to his apostles (ST III 42, 1 c and ad 2); he himself teaches in such a way as to imprint his teaching in the hearts of his hearers rather than on paper (III 42, 4), and he follows a certain order, teaching his disciples that they in turn might teach others (\textit{ibid}.), orally and in writing. Thus we have a process of doctrinal communication beginning with Christ who teaches orally and empowers his disciples to preach and to write, and so on down through the ages.\footnote{\textit{Ibid}., p. 244.}

I will return to the question of the structure of the \textit{Summa} more fully in the
conclusion of the present study, to engage the longstanding debate initiated by Chenu’s
suggestion of a Neoplatonic plan of \textit{exitus et reditus}.\footnote{Chenu, \textit{Toward Understanding St. Thomas}, pp. 304-06.} For present introductory purposes, let me state my agreement with Laporte’s emphasis upon the pedagogy of Christ as the constant presupposition of the \textit{Summa}’s exhortation to follow him; an exhortation that itself gratefully participates, as does all theology, in Christ’s initial instruction.\footnote{Thus Laporte, \textit{op. cit}.; p. 244: “There accumulates a body of materials accessible to the theologian, beginning with Scripture, followed by the articles of faith which summarize the Scriptures,}
you to reap that for which you did not labor; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor,” says Jesus in John’s gospel (4.38), about which Aquinas observes that the apostles, to whom Jesus was speaking, are in a sense both sowers and reapers—reaping what was sown by the prophets by being sent to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Mt 10.5), but also sowing, as they are sent again “to the whole world, to preach the good news to every creature” (Mk 16.15).\(^{49}\) Hence, when Jesus says several verses earlier: “Lift up your eyes, look at the fields, because they are already white for the harvest” (Jn 4.35), he is speaking of the harvest of knowledge in the present, where the fields represent “all those things from which truth can be acquired, especially the Scriptures,” in accordance with John 5.39: “Search the Scriptures... because they bear witness to me.”\(^{50}\)

Laporte’s treatment of christological pervasiveness in the *Summa* lacks, however, any advertence to the identity of Christ the incarnate teacher as *Word* of God, a basic structural and substantive assumption that forms the basis for sacred doctrine as an imitative wisdom. On this count, several studies by Mark Jordan and Joseph Wawrykow may be read as necessary supplementations to Laporte.

Jordan, in *Ordering Wisdom* (1986), and in a series of essays many of which are now collected in *Rewritten Theology* (2006), calls attention to the pattern of textual

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\(^{49}\) *In Ioh* 4.38, n. 654.

hierarchies in Thomas’s thought, as a principled imitation of God’s own wise formation of the faithful. At one level, Jordan identifies the pattern in Thomas’s situation of the various disciplines of human learning vis à vis theology; that, for instance, beginning students rightly start with “logic, then mathematics, then natural philosophy, then moral matters,” all of which precede “the things of wisdom, divine things,” which are meant to be experienced.51 In this view, “the members of the hierarchy of scientiae” may be said to function as “discourses in their own right” that nonetheless “participate finally in the first member of their hierarchy,” namely, God’s own knowledge or scientia, the “ground and... completion” of all others.52 And Jordan is not shy about drawing a polemical consequence of the foregoing: that “philosophy” names “the unfulfilled condition of wisdom under paganism,” so that “a Christian can only conceive living philosophically as a prelude to the life of grace.”53

Jordan also identifies the pattern of textual hierarchy as an organizing feature within Thomas’s theology. In the first question of the Summa, for instance, Thomas assumes the possibility and the fittingness of organizing “inherited theological languages into a unified rhetorical structure that points,” and more particularly guides, the student

51 “Writing Secrets,” Rewritten Theology, p. 175.

52 Ordering Wisdom: The Hierarchy of Philosophical Discourses in Aquinas (Notre Dame: UNDP, 1986), p. 83. Cf. ST I 1, 1 ad 2 for a characteristic prooftext for the point: “nothing prohibits discussing the same thing both as the philosophical disciplines understand it, i.e. by the light of natural reason, and as another science understands it, i.e. by the light of divine revelation.” Or again: “that which is treated among the different philosophical sciences can, by this one sacred doctrine, be considered under one order (sub una ratione), as these various matters are taken as ‘revealable’ of divinity (divinitus revelabilia)” (ST I 1, 3 ad 2).

53 “Writing Secrets,” p. 177. Jordan draws this particular consequence in nearly every essay in Rewritten Theology.
“to the illumination and attainment of the human end” in God.54 The point is critical, first, if we are to understand Thomas as a “disputative exegete,” whose arrangement of Scripture and articles and doctors of the Church in “almost any article in the Summa... turns upon dialectically stressed interpretations of textual authorities. Unless a reader can begin to share Thomas’s passion for rigorous readings,” Jordan continues, “in which single words and phrases very much matter, she will hardly make progress in reading what theology he writes.”55 Second, and more importantly, Thomas’s very attentiveness to language, and especially to the words of revelation, invites reflection on “the ‘ontology’ of texts,” all of which Thomas understands as privileged analogues to the Incarnation of the Son. Why does the appeal to the sacred text heal the rift between ‘natural’ and ‘supernatural’? It does so because a text embodies both fleeting sound and timeless sense, limitation of expression and illimitation of meaning. That is, of course, one of the large reasons why Christ can meaningfully be called ‘the Word.”56

This last matter—the intrinsic relation between the Word of God and human words, particularly as mediated by Scripture—serves as a motivating problem for the present study, in part because Jordan has shown little interest in working it out with reference to the principal loci of theology in Thomas (Trinity, Christology, and

54 “Thomas’s Alleged Aristotelianism or Aristotle among the Authorities,” Rewritten Theology, p. 87.

55 “The Competition of Authoritative Languages,” Rewritten Theology, p. 21. Cf. further on the particular pattern of disputation in the Summa ibid., pp. 120 and 146.

sacraments related to these). How exactly might or does the Word of God serve as a decisive precedent for all texts, and “the sacred text” (as Jordan says) in particular? And, if Aquinas presumed this to be the case, where—in the *Summa*, for instance—does he speak about it, and how significant is the point for a proper understanding of his larger achievement?

Joseph Wawrykow’s essay on “Wisdom in the Christology of Thomas Aquinas” charts a useful course for the address of such questions, building on Jordan, but “not at the expense of the ideas that Thomas expresses about the Word who becomes incarnate.” For our purposes, three preliminary lessons may be culled from Wawrykow’s essay. First, Wawrykow notes Thomas’s systematic and orderly handling of the Word in the *Summa*: that the discussion of the redemptive Word in the *tertia pars* builds upon the treatment of the creative Word in the *prima*. The Word, as “the eternal concept of God, ... stands as the exemplar (likeness) of all creatures,” and so is fittingly the incarnated actor who should, by the power of the Father, initiate the “second

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57 The only focused handling of sacraments that I have found in Jordan’s work is his brief study of sacramental causality in ST III 60-65 in “Philosophy in a *Summa of Theology*,” *Rewritten Theology*, pp. 163-68, in service of the formal point that Thomas “converts philosophy into theology” (p. 168). I know of no treatment of God as Trinity or of Jesus Christ in Jordan’s writings on Aquinas (or Augustine).

58 Wawrykow, “Wisdom in the Christology of Thomas Aquinas,” p. 175. Wawrykow does not in his essay criticize Jordan; I am drawing the contrastive point for my own purposes. Wawrykow adverts positively to Jordan’s work by citing two of his essays in the first footnote, in evidence of the claim that “readers of Aquinas are increasingly... more attentive to the ways in which what might be called Thomas’s literary decisions have shaped and promoted his thought” (p. 175). The essays are “The Alleged Aristotelianism of Thomas Aquinas” (1992) and “The Competition of Authoritative Languages and Aquinas’s Theological Rhetoric” (1994), both of which appear in revised form in *Rewritten Theology*, as chs. 4 and 2, respectively.
creation,” as Thomas says. Here, Thomas demonstrates “the wisdom of the overall organization” of the Summa. Second, Wawrykow tracks Thomas’s “sapiential” explication of the Word of God himself, following Paul: that Christ is the “power of God and the wisdom of God” for “those who are called” to follow him (I Cor 1.24); for “the human person is perfected in wisdom (which is the proper perfection of the human person as rational) by participating the Word of God who is Wisdom.” Third, Wawrykow develops the latter point by drawing out Thomas’s sustained interest in the passion of Christ, the crucified Word of Wisdom, first in Thomas’s commentary on I Corinthians 1-2, and then as a foundational part of the christological “grammar” of questions 1-26 of the tertia pars. While Christ’s suffering was not strictly necessary, insists Aquinas (for God could have saved humankind by some other means), “that Christ was able to, and did, suffer makes much sense and discloses God’s wisdom,” not least because, “as Thomas never tires of reminding us..., everything about Christ, including the death for others, calls for emulation.”

Together with Jordan’s insight into the christological basis of all language in Aquinas (following Augustine, following Scripture), Wawrykow’s work helps to frame my own structural and substantive analysis of Word in the Summa. Building on

59 Wawrykow, “Wisdom in the Christology of Thomas Aquinas,” p. 182, in a discussion of ST III 3, 8 c. As Wawrykow notes, Thomas is building here on the “theological anthropology” of ST I 34 and 93 (p. 183 and in notes 21-22).
60 Ibid., p. 183.
61 Ibid., p. 184.
62 Ibid., pp. 185-89.
63 Ibid., pp. 188-89.
Wawrykow, I suggest in chapter 2 that Thomas presents all of sacred doctrine as “Corinthian” in character, in terms of the volume of citations from I and II Corinthians (already in ST I 1), and in terms of Thomas’s concern to press with and after St Paul upon the making of disciples who have learned what it means to follow the crucified Word of wisdom, a word that by definition seems foolish to the watching world, “but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (I Cor 1.18). Here especially, I mark Thomas’s debts to Augustine and Pseudo-Dionysius, both of whom order their thought (across a number of works) after a similarly Pauline pattern. Thomas’s system is in large part a reading and rendering of these forbears to the end of developing with them a science of crucified wisdom after the mold of the incarnate Christ, spoken by the Father in the love of the Spirit.

This is no more true in any single locus of theology than the sacraments, and on this account my argument is from the beginning aimed especially at understanding their place and purpose in the Summa. That Thomas takes the sacraments to be the subject matter of I Corinthians—since Paul begins the letter with reference to Baptism, comes to questions of matrimony several chapters later, and finally, at chapter 10 and following, reflects at length on the Eucharist—provides a useful opening that I argue should shape any evaluation of the aims of the Summa. The significance of Thomas’s appropriation of Dionysius in question 1, for instance—who, after Paul, commends wisdom as both “study and suffering of divine things”⁶⁴—should be interpreted in the light of the sacramental curriculum of I Corinthians. And Thomas’s shaping of the entirety of ST I 1 after the

⁶⁴ ST I 1, 6 ad 3.
initiation of “the word (logos) of the cross” (I Cor 1.18) effectively prepares the student of sacred doctrine to take every thought captive in obedience (obsequium) to Christ also in this respect: that he follow his incarnate Lord to Calvary, “disregarding its shame” (Heb 12.2). In this way, the total accomplishment of the Summa is ordered toward Thomas’s massive treatment of Christ as “savior of all,” itself applied to the sacraments as “effects” of the incarnate Word.65

Here most especially, the Summa’s ordo disciplinae, the systematic arranging of all things in the light of God in Christ, is placed in the service of its ordo inventionis, the disciplined formation in and after Christ’s actions and words both, until one’s mind and heart have been touched and changed by him. The two “orders” converge, and are interpenetrated to the point of indistinguishability, in the person of the Word, “the sign of the passion of Christ” borne as “a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name” (Heb 13.15).66

65 III prologue; III 60 prologue, in light of III 60, 3 c et passim.

66 In Heb 13.12-15, nn. 748-52, esp. n. 749: “Portantes improperium eius, scilicet Christi, id est signa passionis Christi.” Hebrews 13.12-13 is a particularly important text for Thomas’s sacramental Christology: see In I Cor 1.2, n. 7; 1.13, n. 32; 1.30, n. 71; and 6.11, n. 287 (ch. 2, below); ST I-II 101, 4 ad 2; 102, 5 ad 5-6; 103, 2 ad 1 (ch. 4, below); III 46, 10 ad 2 (ch. 5, below); III, 60, 3 (ch. 6, below); and III, 83, 3 (ch. 7, below). Cf. In Phil 4.21, n. 181.
CHAPTER 2:

THE FORM OF SACRED DOCTRINE: ST I 1 AS GUIDE TO THE WHOLE

I. The Corinthian character of sacra doctrina (Q. 1, aa. 1-7)

The first question of the Summa treats the “nature and extent of sacred doctrine,” which we learned in the prologue is the subject of the whole work. Aquinas thus naturally avails of this opportunity to articulate something of his methodology. For present purposes, the argument may be viewed in several, mutually reinforcing stages.

First, sacred doctrine is a saving knowledge revealed by God because, in the words of Isaiah 64.4, “the eye has not seen, O God, besides you, what things you have prepared for them that love you.” It was, in other words, “necessary” for human salvation “that certain things which exceed human reason should be made known by divine revelation.” For while there are some truths about God which can be investigated by human reason, allows Thomas, they “would have been apparent to few people, and only then after a long time and with the admixture of many errors.... Therefore, to ensure human salvation the more fitly and certainly, divine revelation was necessary for

67 See the heading of I 1: “De sacra doctrina, qualis sit et ad quae se extendat,” and the last sentence of the prologue.
instruction about divine matters.”

On this count, Thomas effectively assimilates sacred doctrine to sacred Scripture, the former deriving its content from the latter, just as sacred doctrine in turn “proceeds from the articles of faith.” That is, the necessary truth of sacred doctrine is revealed in an authoritative text that is itself interpreted and authoritatively codified in summary form.

That sacred doctrine exceeds human reason does not, of course, mean that reason has no part to play in the “theology which pertains to sacred doctrine.” On the contrary, Thomas cannot imagine how human beings might receive divine revelation, come to understand more about it, and defend it without employing human reason. Sacred doctrine thus “borrows from the philosophical disciplines... to better display what it teaches.” For our “defective intelligence is more easily led by what is known through

68 1, 1 c. Thomas does think, under pressure of Rom 1.19-20, that “natural reason” can “know” (nota) certain basic things about God, i.e. that he exists; and sometimes refers to these truths as “preambles” to the articles of the faith. This natural knowledge tells us nothing about God, however (as, e.g., Herbert McCabe emphasizes in “Aquinas on the Trinity,” New Blackfriars, 80/940 [1999], pp. 268-83). Cf. 1, 1 ad 2, where Thomas speaks of two kinds of theology, “that which pertains to sacred doctrine” and “that which is part of philosophy,” and Expositio super librum Boethii De Trinitate (hereafter: Expositio) 2, 3 c. Thomas also calls the kind of theology that philosophy performs “first philosophy” (Expositio 2, 2 c; Summa contra Gentiles [hereafter: ScG] I 1), and “metaphysics” (ScG I 4).

69 1, 2 ad 2: “revelatio divina... super quam fundatur sacra Scriptura seu doctrina” and 1, 2 obj 1: “sacra doctrina procedit ex articulis fidei.” Cf. Expositio 5, 4 c, where sacred doctrine is referred to as “the theology of sacred Scripture” (theologia sacrae scripturae).


71 1, 1 ad 2.
natural reason (from which philosophy proceeds) to that which is above reason, namely, the subject matter of sacred doctrine.”

Second, sacred doctrine should be understood as a “science” because it “proceeds from principles known by the light of a higher science, namely, the science of God and the blessed.” In other words, sacred doctrine originates in God’s own mind, and so is a part of his “knowledge” (scientia) which comprehends and sustains, and thus is “one and simple” with respect to, “all things.” On this account, sacred doctrine “bears... the stamp of the divine science,” and when human beings reflect upon or tend this body of knowledge they approach its diverse concerns as these are “knowable in the divine light,” because it is “from the divine scientia... that all our knowledge is arranged.” Thus, God is the “subject” of theological reflection, as every created thing is related to the divine

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72 1, 5 ad 2. Cf. the three uses of philosophy by sacred doctrine adumbrated at Expositio 2, 3 c. The second “use” that Thomas mentions matches the one that he intends here at ST I 1, 5 ad 2. For vivid comments on human ineptitude with respect to knowledge of God, see ScG I 3-4.

73 1, 2 c.

74 1, 3 ad 2: “sacra doctrina sit velut quaedam impressio divinae scientiae, quae est una et simplex omnium.” Cf. similarly Thomas’s statement of this point at Expositio 2, 2 c: “fit nobis in statu viae quaedam illius cognitionis participatio et assimilatio ad cognitionem divinam, in quantum per fidem nobis infusam inhaeremus ipsi primae veritati propter se ipsam.”

75 1, 4 c and 6 ad 1. Cf. Mark D. Jordan, Ordering Wisdom: The Hierarchy of Philosophical Discourses in Aquinas (Notre Dame: UNDP, 1986), p. 83 and passim; and, on the Aristotelian pedigree of Thomas’s argument, John I. Jenkins, Knowledge and Faith in Thomas Aquinas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), chs. 1-3. On sacred doctrine as “subalternated” to the divine science, see Expositio 2, 2 ad 7. The principle use of the “the philosophical disciplines” or sciences (ST I 1, 5 c and ad 2) is, in this view, to help explain the truths of sacred doctrine, to correct errors, and to “exercise and comfort” (exercitium et solatium) the minds of the faithful, as Thomas suggests more expansively at ScG I 9 (cf. for a slightly different list Expositio 2, 3 c). With these sorts of texts in view, Mark Jordan argues that philosophy is not an “autonomous” pursuit for Aquinas; see, e.g., “Thomas’s Alleged Aristotelianism or Aristotle among the Authorities” in Rewritten Theology: Aquinas after His Readers (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), esp. p. 87. For a contrasting view, see Wayne Hankey, “Why Philosophy Abides for Aquinas,” Heythrop Journal 42 (2001), pp. 329-48.
order or reason. That is, the science of sacred doctrine is literally “made from the word (sermo) of God” and on this account is properly called “theology,” a point that recalls Thomas’s insistence in his commentary on Hebrews that the “sermo Dei” of Scripture is the living Verbum or Logos of God. In this respect, Scripture stands as the best record of God’s knowledge because its written word serves as a necessary but only introductory scientific script, pointing beyond itself.

If sacred doctrine is a salvifically revealed knowledge, ordered by and around God’s own reason that itself has a christological cast as word, it follows, thirdly, that sacred doctrine is also a wisdom, again preeminently so. As Thomas notes, holy Scripture identifies the knowledge of “holy things” as a gift of wisdom to Jacob, a righteous man (Wis 10.10). And sacred doctrine is greater—more worthy, more dignified—than the

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76 1, 7 c: “Omnia autem pertractantur in sacra doctrina sub ratione Dei, vel quia sunt ipse Deus, vel quia habent ordinem ad Deum, ut ad principium et finem. Unde sequitur quod Deus vere sit subjectum huius scientiae.” The English Dominicans translate subjectum as “object,” which usefully communicates Thomas’s primary meaning in article 7 c: that God is, so to speak, the materia of human theological reflection. The English “subject” also communicates this, however, in terms of subject matter, while at the same time reminding the reader that God is the instigator and sustainer of all theological reflection (see again 1, 3 ad 2, partly quoted above), the conscious subject who cognizes relative to a host of objects mentally represented, as Descartes and Kant would have it. The latter way of stating the point need not be understood as an anachronistic imposition on Thomas. It may, for instance, be a faithful summary of 1, 7 sc, discussed immediately below: that this science of which God is the subject is made from his own word. On the usefulness of subject/object language in an analogous instance, see R. A. Markus, “Augustine on Signs” (1957), repr. in Signs and Meanings: World and Text in Ancient Christianity (Liverpool: L U P, 1996), at p. 87, discussed in ch. 6 of the present study. Cf. ST I 13, 12 ad 2: “intellectus noster non potest formas simplices subsistentes [sc. Deus] secundum quod in seipsis sunt, apprehendere, sed apprehendit eas secundum modum compositorum, in quibus est aliquid quod subiicitur, et est aliquid quod inest. Et ideo apprehendit formam simplicem in ratione subjecti, et attribuit ei aliquid.”

77 1, 7 sc: “in hac scientia fit sermo de Deo, dicitur enim theologia, quasi sermo de Deo. Ergo Deus est subjectum huius scientiae.” Cf. 1, 1 obj 2: “unde quaedam pars philosophiae dicitur theologia, sive scientia divina.”

78 In Heb 4.12, n. 217, discussed in the previous chapter.

79 1, 3 sc.
other sciences according to their proverbial sending out by Wisdom as so many handmaidens, that they may invite the simple to “turn in here” (Prov 9.3), to come up “to the tower,” as Aquinas says. After all, James 1.22: “be doers of the word, and not merely hearers,” may be understood in this way: that God’s singular knowledge of himself and his works comprehends both the speculative and the practical aspects of human knowledge, by ordaining human acts (which are also treated in sacred doctrine) to an end of “perfect knowledge” of God, “in which consists eternal bliss.” So too, therefore, in terms of the practical purpose and end of God’s wisdom for human beings, as Thomas explains most thoroughly in article 6 with reference to sacred doctrine as “the greatest wisdom,” indeed wisdom itself. For “a wise person brings order and judges, and since lesser matters should be determined by greater ones, the wise person in a given field naturally minds that field’s greatest concern. Thus, in construction, the one who plans the structure (formam) of the house is wise, since he is the architect and not merely one of the builders.” “As a wise architect, I have laid the foundation,” wrote Paul to the Corinthians (I Cor 3.10). Similarly, in sacred doctrine, the one who considers the absolutely highest cause of the whole universe, namely God, is the wisest of all. Hence, as Augustine says, wisdom is the knowledge of divine things. But sacred doctrine most properly treats of God as the highest cause—not only insofar as he is knowable through creatures as philosophers knew him, according to Romans 1.19: “What was known of God is manifest in them,”

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80 1, 5 sc. Cf. similarly In I Cor 1.27, n. 66.
81 1, 4 obj 1 and c.
82 All from 1, 6 c.
but also as he is known to himself alone and is communicated to others by revelation. Hence sacred doctrine is called the greatest wisdom.\(^{83}\)

Aquinas here emphasizes the wisdom of sacred doctrine as something that wise persons themselves “consider;” he does not even bother to identify God as wisdom. The argument presses in the same theological direction as preceding articles, however, by placing the human need for wisdom in a context of God’s communication of his own self-knowledge. In this perspective, human beings may rightly see themselves as practical “works” of God, in the idiom of article 4, that are especially “formed” by his wisdom in a causal manner, as article 6 elaborates.

The response to the third objection of article 6 further focuses this constructive understanding of sacred doctrine as an exercise ordered toward a particular experience of God and way of life. How can sacred doctrine be wisdom, the objection reasons, if it “is acquired through study, whereas wisdom is infused, and thus counted among the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, as we see in Isaiah (11.2)”\(^{84}\)? In reply, Thomas suggests that wisdom is twofold, by inclination and by knowledge. In the first case, “whoever has the habit of a virtue judges rightly about that virtue by his very inclination towards it,” as Aristotle taught. In the second case, “someone learned in moral science might be able to

\(^{83}\) *Ibid.*, citing *De trin.* 12.14. Cf. by way of precedent Thomas’s earlier handlings of wisdom, especially in the prologue of the *Scriptum on the Sentences* and at ScG I 1-9. In the former text, Thomas locates “all of theological discourse under the sign of ‘Wisdom’” in a christological key, so that the first book will treat “the work of Wisdom in revealing the hidden things of God,” the second “the creative work of Wisdom,” the third “the restoration of fallen humanity by the Wisdom who is also responsible as exemplar for the establishment of all things,” and the fourth “the perfective work of Wisdom” (quoting Joseph Wawrykow’s summary in “Wisdom in the Christology of Thomas Aquinas,” *Christ among the Medieval Dominicans*, pp. 190-91). For an English translation of the prologue of the *Scriptum*, see *Thomas Aquinas: Selected Writings*, ed. and trans. by Ralph McInerny (London: Penguin, 1998), pp. 51-54.

\(^{84}\) 1, 6 obj 3.
judge rightly about virtuous acts, even if she did not herself have virtue.” Likewise in
sacred doctrine, one kind of

judgment about divine things belongs to that wisdom which is counted as a gift of
the Holy Spirit, according to I Corinthians 2.15: “The spiritual person judges all
things;” and as Dionysius says in On Divine Names: “Hierotheus was taught not
only by learning about but also by experience of divine things.” The second
manner of judgment belongs to this doctrine, insofar as it may be gained through
study, although its principles are gained from revelation.85

The reply builds on the argument of the corpus, which focused on the making of
wise persons through reflection on God’s own, revealed knowledge of himself. To sift
this body of knowledge is to be caught up in one’s subject matter, at least intellectually;
thus one may come “to judge rightly” about virtue apart from one’s own habit of life.86
The instance of Hierotheus, however, apparently suggests a more excellent path, for he
was both a student (discens) and a sufferer (patiens) of divinity. In at least his case, the
two ways of wisdom—by inclination and by knowledge—converged, as Dionysius
emphasizes in the passage in question: that Hierotheus was formed (i) by direct learning
from “the sacred writers,” (ii) by “his own perspicacious and laborious research of the
scriptures,” and (iii) by “whatever was made known to him through that more mysterious
inspiration, not only learning but also experiencing the divine things.”87 Rather than

85 All from 1, 6 ad 3. The Latin from the block quotation runs as follows: “Primus igitur modus
iudicandi de rebus divinis pertinet ad sapientiam quae ponitur donum Spiritus Sancti, secundum illud I Cor
2.15: spiritualis homo iudicat omnia, etc.; et Dionysius dicit, 2 cap. De divinis nominibus: Hierotheus
doctus est non solum discens sed et patiens divina. Secundus autem modus iudicandi pertinet ad hanc
doctrinam, secundum quod per studium habetur; licet eius principia ex revelatione habeantur.”

86 Ibid.: “aliquis instructus in scientia morali, posset iudicare de actibus virtutis, etiam si virtutem
non habet.”

Rorem suggests in a footnote an Aristotelian parallel (Frag. 15) for the Dionysian patiens divina, and also
pitting study and prayer against one another, Dionysius here argues that Hierotheus was holy because he recognized that human intellectual activity “proceeds” out of a trinitarian matrix most especially marked by “the sacred incarnation of Jesus for our sakes.” Thus “our minds lay hold of...nothing other than certain activities...which deify, cause being, bear life, and give wisdom” after the pattern of the Word. Accordingly, in the Dionysian view, theological study properly ends in a “sympathy” with the subject matter, that is, a perfect experience of “mysterious union” and “faith,” of a sort that is however distinguishable from, and so presumably—on both principled and phenomenological grounds—unconstrained by, one’s peculiar educational profile.

On each of the preceding points Aquinas seizes and develops the Dionysian precedent, explicating the scriptural and especially the Pauline source of the

Hebrews 5.8: “he learned obedience through what he suffered” (p. 65 note 120). See below, esp. note 140, for Thomas’s “Corinthian” rendering of Hebrews.

88 Ibid. 2.7-9 (pp. 64-65). This effectively summarizes the whole of chapter 2 of Divine Names. Dionysius returns to Wisdom and Word as names of God in chapter 7 (pp. 105-10).

89 Ibid. 2.9 (p. 65): “For he had a ‘sympathy’ with such matters, if I may express it this way, and he was perfected in a mysterious union with them and in a faith in them which was independent of any education.” The same principle holds, mutatis mutandis, for teachers: “Whoever wrongfully dares to teach holiness to others before he has regularly practiced it himself is unholy and is a stranger to sacred norms” (Ecclesiastical Hierarchy 3.14 [p. 223]). The sacramental end intended by Dionysius when he speaks of experience of and union with God may be seen esp. in Ecclesiastical Hierarchy 3, which again begins reverently with the example of Hierotheus to establish that the Eucharist “is indeed the sacrament of sacraments” (ibid., p. 209ff.). Cf. Celestial Hierarchy 1.3: “The reception of the most divine Eucharist is a symbol of participation in Jesus” (ibid., p. 146).

Areopagite’s commendation of both study and experience of God (non solum discens sed et patiens divina).  

The methodological statement of the Summa’s prologue gives notice that the ensuing work will seek to “instruct beginners in Catholic truth” on analogy to the milk given by Paul to the Corinthians, namely, as a necessary preparation for the solid food that God would have each one receive in her maturity, “in Christ” (I Cor 3.1-2). This first quotation of I Corinthians functions as a rivulet leading to a stream of similar reference in question 1—amounting to one quarter of the total, and half of the specifically Pauline, scriptural citations in the question—the bulk of which draw out the thesis of the opening chapters of I Corinthians: that God’s wisdom in Christ is primary, and potentially transformative in a host of practical ways. Yes, “the spiritual person judges all citations clés qui, répandues dans l’ensemble de l’œuvre, tissent un lien secret entre des problématiques apparemment indépendantes et manifestent par là même l’unité et la cohérence profonde de la pensée thomasiennne ainsi que l’intention de sagesse qui y prédise” (Serge-Thomas Bonino, “Les voiles sacrés’: À propos d’une citation de Denys,” Storia del tomismo (fonti e riflessi) [Studi tomistici 45; Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Pontificia Accademia di S. Tommaso e di Religione Cattolica, 1992], pp. 158-59).

91 As Dionysius himself puts it, Hierotheus was his “elementary instructor” “next to the divine Paul” (Divine Names 3.2; p. 69).

92 ST prologue: “Catholicae veritatis doctor non solum provectos debet instruere, sed ad eum pertinet etiam incipientes erudire, secundum illud apostoli I ad Cor 3: tanguam parvulis in Christo, lac vobis potum dedi, non escam.” This is the only text of Scripture cited in the prologue.

93 Of the twenty-seven explicit references to Scripture in question 1, I or II Corinthians are cited and/or quoted seven times: I Cor 3.1-2 (prologue), I Cor 2.9 (a. 1 c, implicitly; see below), I Cor 3.10 (a. 6 c), II Cor 10.4-5 (a. 6 ad 2), I Cor 2.15 (a. 6 ad 3), I Cor 15 (a. 8 c), II Cor 10.5 (a. 8 ad 2). Six of the remaining references are to other (presumptively, in Thomas’s view) Pauline texts: II Tim 3.16 (a. 1 sc), II Thess 3.2 (a. 2 obj 1), Rom 1.19 (a. 6 c), Tit 1.9 (a. 8 sc), Rom 1.14 (a. 9 c), Heb 10.1 (a. 10 c). After I and II Corinthians, the next most-cited book of the Bible in question 1 is Ecclesiasticus/Sirach with three occurrences (a. 1 obj 1, a. 1 c, and a. 9 obj 2). Cf. for a similar Corinthian pattern the Expositio on Boethius at 2, 3, which also cites several different texts than ST I 1. The first question of the Scriptum on the Sentences is, by contrast, much less Corinthian, citing only I Cor 2.6 (“we speak wisdom among the mature” at Prologue q. 1, a. 3 sc) and I Cor 15.16 (Paul’s argument for the resurrection at Prologue q. 1, a. 5 ad 4).
things,” allows Paul (I Cor 2.15), for such a one is mature in Christ, having been 
“taught by the Spirit” (2.13; cf. 3.1). But for that very reason the Corinthians need 
reminding of their prior “call” from God, that is, his choosing of them because “not 
many... were wise by human standards” (1.26), so as to “reveal through the Spirit” (2.10) 
that which “the rulers of this age” do not understand, namely, “what God has prepared for 
those who love him” (2.8-9). “We,” therefore, “have the mind of Christ” (2.16; cf. Is 
40.13), Paul concludes, in a sentence that at once sets up his confrontation of Corinthian 
culpability at 3.1-2 (enshrined by Thomas in the prologue of the Summa) and points to his 
prescriptive solution, namely, that Jesus Christ alone is the “foundation” upon which each 
builder must build (3.11), in anticipation of the disclosive day when “fire will test what 
sort of work each has done” (3.13).

Replaced in the context of Paul’s letter, Thomas may be seen to have borrowed in 
question 1 both the structure and the lexical and grammatical texture of Paul’s argument 
to advance a similar thesis for his own students, namely, the urgency of their conformity 
in word (or thought) and deed to the pattern of Christ. In this light, it is useful also to read 

94 1, 6 ad 3.
95 Thomas actually cites Isaiah 64 in the quotation at 1, 1 c, but he likely was mindful of Paul’s 
quotation of these words at I Corinthian 2.9, not least in view of the Corinthian frame of the prologue and 
question 1, constructed especially from I Corinthians 2-3. I build here on Joseph Wawrykow, “Wisdom in 
the Christology of Thomas Aquinas,” which argues that “it is quite likely that Thomas expects the reader of 
the opening article of the Summa to perceive the christological dimension of the citation from Isaiah and to 
give it its full weight” (p. 191), not only in light of the prior citation of I Corinthians in the general prologue 
of the entire work but also the christological focus of the prologues of I 2 (about which, see below) and III, 
as well as the Corinthian character of III 3, 8 and the “much more sustained and ambitious” prologue of the 
Scriptum, both of which deploy I Corinthians 1.24 and 30 on Christ as God’s Wisdom (p. 190).
96 1, 6 c. Paul effectively returns to this basic theme—obedience to the mind of Christ as the 
source of Christian teaching—in the text quoted by Thomas at both 1, 6 ad 2 and 1, 8 ad 2, II Corinthians 
10.4-5: “We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God, and we 
take every thought captive to obey Christ.”
ST I 1 alongside Thomas’s (either contemporaneous or subsequent\(^{97}\)) commentary on I Corinthians and vice versa, allowing each to interpret the other. For present purposes, a study of the first three chapters of the commentary will both amplify the foregoing interpretation of I 1, 1-7 and enrich our understanding of the last three articles of the question.

II. The word of the cross: Sacrament and doctrine in I Corinthians 1-3

The prologue of Thomas’s commentary on I Corinthians is ordered around an epigraph from Wisdom: “I will tell you what wisdom is and how she came to be, and I will hide no secrets (sacramenta) from you, but will trace her course from the beginning of creation and make knowledge of her clear, and will not pass by the truth” (Wis 6.22).\(^{98}\) The text recalls both the quotation of Wisdom 10.10 at ST I 1, 3 sc, taken by Thomas as

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\(^{97}\) Torrell judges that Thomas composed the \textit{prima pars} in Rome during the years 1266-68. By contrast, it “is not easy to say with precision to what years of Thomas’s teaching the courses on Saint Paul belong,” though the leading hypothesis in the scholarship surmises that Thomas commented on Paul’s epistles “in two stages, first in Italy (perhaps in Rome, between 1265 and 1268), then in Paris and Naples,” without however repeating “the same courses in their entirety.” That said, the commentary on Romans “dates very probably from the last years of [Thomas’s] life, in Naples from 1272-73,” and “the reportatio made by Reginald of Piperno, which goes from I Corinthians 11 through the epistle to the Hebrews, may be the fruit of teaching during the years 1265-68 in Rome.” Unfortunately, the commentary on I Corinthians is missing a substantial section—from 7.15 to the end of chapter 10—making it difficult to “say anything precise concerning the course on the first ten chapters” (\textit{STA I}, pp. 333, p. 340; cf. 142ff.). A conservative estimate, therefore, would perhaps put the first part of the commentary on I Corinthians in the earlier period (1265-68); though, if the text represents “a more developed \textit{expositio} for I Cor 1.1-7.14, probably revised by Thomas himself toward the end of his life,” then the earlier portion of the commentary would have attained its current form during the composition of the \textit{tertia pars} (Daniel Keating, “Aquinas on 1 and 2 Corinthians: The Sacraments and Their Ministers,” \textit{Aquinas on Scripture: An Introduction to his Biblical Commentaries}, ed. Thomas G. Weinandy, Daniel A. Keating, and John P. Yocum [London: T & T Clark, 2005], pp. 127-28). In all events, Torrell rightly observes in conclusion that “despite the diversity of these pieces, it is nevertheless certain that Thomas thought of his commentary as a whole, as the Prologue placed at the head of this group of texts shows” (\textit{loc. cit.}). Cf. Prügl, “Thomas Aquinas as Interpreter of Scripture,” p. 390. Prügl suggests as an alternative hypothesis that Thomas’s “first commentary on St Paul may be dated to his first teaching assignment in Paris” in 1256 (\textit{ibid.}, p. 391 and notes 20 and 68).

\(^{98}\) \textit{In I Cor} prologue: “Non abscondam a vobis sacramenta Dei, etc.: Sap 6.24.”
proof that sacred doctrine is a unified science of divinity, and the methodological
reiteration of the prologue of ST I 2: “the principal intention of this sacred doctrine is to
hand on knowledge of God, not only as he is in himself, but also as he is the beginning
and end of things, and especially of rational creatures.” Thomas also, however, takes
Wisdom 6.22 to indicate more explicitly the form that knowledge of God’s truth takes in
his created economy, namely, a sacramental form. The seven sacraments are “signs of a
sacred thing, in the sense of being its image and cause,” and so are “secret” vehicles for
the work of divine power, as Augustine says. And yet “these sacraments of God should
not be concealed but laid bare to Christ’s faithful by their teachers and prelates,” on three
counts: (i) that honor may redound to God, in the confession of his works (see Tob 12.7);
(ii) to the end of human salvation, since we “are purified by the sacraments and prepared
for receiving the wages of justice;” and (iii) because “this is a duty of teachers and
prelates,” as Paul testifies: “though I am the very least of the saints, this grace was given
to me, to make clear to all what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God” (Eph
3.8). For all of these reasons, the sacraments are the subject matter of Paul’s first letter
to the Corinthians.

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99 I 2 prologue.

100 In I Cor prologue, n. 1: “Sacramenti nomen dupliciter accipi consuevit. Nam quandoque sacramentum dicitur quodcumque secretum, et praeceipue de rebus sacris; quandoque sacramentum dicitur sacrae rei signum, ita quod et eius imaginem gerat, et causa existat, secundum quod nos dicimus septem sacramenta Ecclesiae, scilicet Baptismus, confirmatio, Eucharistia, poenitentia, extrema unctio, ordo et matrimonium. In qua quidem significacione sacramenti etiam prima significatio continetur; nam in his Ecclesiae sacramentis, divina virtus secretius operatur salutem, ut Augustinus dicit.”

101 Ibid., n. 2: “Haec igitur sacramenta Dei praelatus, seu doctor Ecclesiae, fidelibus Christi non debet abscondere sed manifestare, propter tria. Primo quidem, quia hoc pertinet ad honorem Dei, secundum illud Tob 12.7: sacramentum regis abscondere bonum est, opera autem Dei revelare et confiteri honorificum est. Secundo, quia hoc pertinet ad salutem hominum, qui per horum ignorantiam in
Similar to the prologue and first article of the *Summa*, Thomas here emphasizes the urgent need by the faithful of knowledge of God’s saving revelation, borne by teachers in the Church. Where ST I 1, 6, however, only gestures at “experience of divine things”—also in a Corinthian key, with reference to the “spiritual person” (2.15)—Thomas here specifies the primacy of the sacraments for human salvation, following Paul’s understanding of Baptism and the Eucharist as means of sanctifying grace. “To the church of God that is in Corinth,” begins the Apostle, “to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus” (I Cor 1.2), and Thomas adds: “in the faith, passion, and sacraments” of Christ, citing the similar but more specific I Corinthians 6.11: “You were washed, you have been sanctified,” as well as Hebrews 13.12: “Jesus suffered outside the gate, in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.” To be washed in Christ’s blood is to receive a “call to be saints,” as Paul says, a call to join with all those “who in every
place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Cor 1.2), which implies confession of “the true faith.”

For this reason, Christian sacramental experience and Christian doctrine share a passional character the end of which is sanctification. Of course, God had already enriched the Corinthians “in Christ Jesus, in every way..., with all speech and knowledge” (I Cor 1.4-5), “because they spoke in all manner of tongues or because they abounded in the utterance of doctrine,” notes Aquinas, and “because the word was not uttered properly unless it proceeded from... the understanding of all Scriptures and, in general, of all things pertaining to salvation: ‘He gave them a knowledge of holy things’ (Wis 10.10).” But in the latter respect Paul placed a condition on Corinthian doctrine and knowledge: that it would not be correct if it “disagreed with the testimony of Christ or if Christ’s testimony did not have a firm hold on their hearts by faith.” While Christ will surely “sustain you to the end” by grace (I Cor 1.8), therefore, this should be understood in the sense of I Peter 5.10: “After you have suffered a little while, he will

104 Ibid., n. 8: “Unde subdit vobis, inquam, qui estis Corinthi scribo, cum omnibus qui invocant nomen domini nostri Iesu Christi, scilicet per veram fidei confessionem.” “Grace and truth came through” Christ (Jn 1.17), after all (ibid. 1.3, n. 9), and “these are certain participations and reflections of the first Truth, which shines out in those souls who are holy” (In Joh 1.17, n. 207: “sed per ipsum factae sunt omnes veritates creatae, quae sunt quaedam participationes et refulgentiae primae veritatis, quae in animabus sanctis relucent”). Cf. In I Cor 5.8, n. 249 for another citation of John 1.17, discussed in ch. 7 of the present study.

105 Ibid. 1.5, n. 13: “in omni verbo, vel quia omnibus generibus linguarum loquebantur, vel quia in verbo doctrinae abundabant. Verbum autem non proferetur ordinate, nisi ex scientia procederet, et ideo subdit in omni scientia, id est, intelligentia omnium Scripturarum, et universaliter omnium quae pertinent ad salutem. Wis 10.10: dedit illi scientiam sanctorum.” See again I 1, 3 sc for citation of this same text from Wisdom.

106 Ibid. 1.6, n. 14: “non esset rectum verbum doctrinae, neque recta scientia, si a testimonio Christi discordaret, vel si etiam Christi testimonium non firmiter per fidem cordibus inhaereret.”

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restore, establish, and strengthen you.” Likewise, “God is faithful” and on this account “calls” us “into the fellowship of his Son” (I Cor 1.9), that is, to “walk in the light as he is in the light” (I Jn 1.7), and “to share in his glory,” “provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him” (Rom 8.17).

This explains why Paul “deals with doctrine along with Baptism” at the very beginning of his letter. To be sure, treating the two together accords with “the example of the Lord, who gave the disciples the injunction to teach and to baptize in one command: ‘Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’ (Mt 28.19).” Right teaching and sacramental initiation are also tied together, however, because Baptism serves as a point of confrontation and humiliation in the person of Christ that imposes an ascetical order upon Christian doctrine. The Corinthian church was, after all, fraught with strife, borne of disagreements between various parties who had been “baptized and instructed” by different leaders—Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and others. But Baptism derives its power

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107 Ibid. 1.8, n. 17: “Unde subdit: qui, scilicet Christus, qui spem dedit vobis huiusmodi revelationis, etiam confirmabit vos in gratia accepta. I Pet ult.: modicum passos ipse perficiet, confirmabit solidabitque. Et hoc usque in finem, scilicet vitae vestrae.”

108 Ibid. 1.9, n. 18: “Deus est fidelis, per quem vocati estis in societatem filii eius Jesu Christi domini nostri, ut scilicet habeatis societatem ad Christum, et in prae senti per similitudinem gratiae, secundum illud I Jn 1.7: si in luce ambulamus, sicut et ipse in luce est, societatem habemus cum eo ad invicem, et in futuro per participationem gloriae, Rom 8.17: si compatimur, ut et simul glorificemur.”


110 Ibid. 1.12, n. 24: “contentionem nominio, quod unusquisque vestrum nominat se ab eo a quo est baptizatus et instructus.” Cf. ibid. 4.6, n. 199: “it should be noted that above when the Apostle tried to repress the rivalry about ministers among the Corinthians, he had used the names of good ministers of Christ, as when he said: ‘Each one of you says, “I belong to Paul,” or “I belong to Apollos,” or “I belong to Cephas”’ (1 Cor 1:12), and again: ‘Whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas’ (1 Cor 3:22). But in fact they were
“from Christ alone,” from both his passion and his name, and on this account “has the power to sanctify.”

Thus the faithful are “baptized in his death” (Rom 6.3), and then enjoined to suffer themselves, as the Apostle testifies: “I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, the Church” (Col 1.24).

Christ’s suffering is in this way both meritorious (again citing Hebrews 13.12: “Jesus suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people”) and exemplary, according to I Peter 2.21: “Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps.”

And this places the second part of Christ’s command in Matthew 28 in a new light, as well; for “in the preaching of the gospel the wisdom and virtue of the preacher contributes a great deal.”

not glorying in Christ’s good ministers or disagreeing over them but over the false apostles, whom he chose not to name, lest it seem that he was speaking against them from hatred or envy. Rather he had employed his own name and the names of other good preachers. And that is what he is saying now: But all this, brethren, namely, what I have said about the ministers in whom you glory and for whom you compete, I have applied to myself and Apollos. For it says in Pr (1:6): ‘To understand a proverb and a figure, the words of the wise and their riddles,’ and this for your benefit: ‘All things are for your sakes’ (2 Cor 4:15); that you may learn by us that none of you may be puffed up, i.e., with pride, in favor of one, i.e., for any of Christ’s ministers, against another, i.e., beyond the form described in the foregoing; for Wis (4:19) states: ‘He will dash them puffed up and speechless to the ground.’”

111 Ibid. 1.13, n. 30: “hoc enim esset, si a baptistis Baptismus efficaciam haberet, quod quidem solius est Christi,” and n. 34: “Sic ergo, si solius Christi passio, si solius Christi nomen virtutem conferit Baptismo ad salvandum, verum est proprium esse Christo, ut ex eo Baptismus habeat sanctificandi virtutem.”

112 Ibid., nn. 31-32: “Primo quidem ex parte passionis Christi, in cuius virtute Baptismus operatur, secundum illud Rom 6.3: quicumque baptizati sumus in Christo Iesu, in morte ipsius baptizati sumus.... Sed contra videtur esse quod apostolus dicit Col 1.24: gaudeo in passionibus meis pro vobis, et adimpleo ea quae desunt passionum Christi in carne mea pro corpore eius, quod est Ecclesia.”

113 Ibid., n. 32: “dicendum quod passio Christi fuit nobis salutifera non solum per modum exempli, secundum illud I Pet 2.21: Christus passus est pro nobis, vobis relinquens exemplum, ut sequamini vestigia eius, sed etiam per modum meriti, et per modum efficaciae, inquantum eius sanguine redempti et iustificati sumus, secundum illud Heb ultimo: ut sanctificaret per suum sanguinem populum, extra portam passus est.”

114 Ibid. 1.17, n. 39: “sed in praedicatione Evangelii multum operatur sapientia et virtus praedicantis.”
Thomas’s third lecture on I Corinthians 1 and subsequent lectures on chapters 2 and 3 develop this thesis in terms of the humility of God—the “word of the cross” (I Cor 1.18)—that forms the pattern of Christian life and learning, a pattern that remains perpetually sacramental. The argument may be organized in several stages.

1. “Christ did not send me... to proclaim the gospel with wise words,” insists Paul (I Cor 1.17; cf. 2.1). “Some of the Corinthians gloried in the doctrine of false apostles, who corrupt the truth of the faith with elegant words and reasons born of human wisdom,” a “verbose” wisdom that inclines human beings “to employ many vain reasons,” as Ecclesiastes suggests: “The more words, the more vanity” (6.11); and again, Proverbs: “Mere talk tends only to want” (14.23). Paul cautions the Corinthians about the dangers of rhetoric, however, “by which people are sometimes drawn to assent to error and falsity.” “By fair and flattering words they deceive the hearts of the simple-minded” (Rom 16.18), like the harlot from whose “smooth words” the faithful are promised deliverance (Prov 2.16). The fact that Paul’s term here is the Greek logos indicates that he is not objecting to reason or words in themselves, notes Aquinas, but a merely human version of these, the sapientia verbi that would seek improperly to reduce the faith to

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human reason.\textsuperscript{116} A distinction should thus be drawn between “teaching in” wise words, where the human words are the main source and condition of one’s doctrine, and “using” them in order to build upon the “foundation of the true faith.” In the latter instance, as suggested at I 1, 5 ad 2 (and Thomas amplifies the point at I 1, 8 ad 2), “any truths in the teachings of the philosophers” may be employed in the service of the faith. Hence Augustine says in \textit{De doctrina christian}a\textsuperscript{2} that if philosophers have uttered things suited to our faith, they should not be feared but taken from them as from an unjust possessor for our use. And in book 4 he says: “Since the faculty of eloquent speech has great power to win a person over to what is base or to what is right, why not use it to fight for the truth, if evil persons misuse it for sin and error?”\textsuperscript{117}

At the same time, continues Paul, Christian wisdom resists the “wisdom of this age” and its “rulers... who are doomed to perish” (I Cor 2.6; cf. Jn 14.30 and 12.31). They “have vanished and gone down to Hades” (Bar 3.19), and so “should not be relied on.”\textsuperscript{118} Instead, “we speak God’s wisdom” (I Cor 2.7) which is God and is from him, imparted “by revelation,” as attested at Wisdom 9.17: “Who has learned your counsel unless you

\textsuperscript{116} \textit{Ibid.}, n. 42: “Sed quia in Graeco ponitur logos, quod rationem et sermonem significat, posset convenientius intelligi sapientia verbi, id est humanae rationis, quia illa quae sunt fidei, humanam rationem excedunt.” Cf. similarly \textit{ibid.} 2.1, n. 74.

\textsuperscript{117} \textit{Ibid.}, n. 43: “alius est docere in sapientia verbi quocumque modo intelligatur, et aliud uti sapientia verbi in docendo. Ille in sapientia verbi docet qui sapientiam verbi accipit pro principali radice suae doctrinae, ita scilicet quod ea solum approbat, quae verbi sapientiam continent: reprobet autem ea quae sapientiam verbi non habent, et hoc fidei est corruptivum. Utitur autem sapientia verbi, qui suppositis verae fidei fundamentis, si qua vera in doctrinis philosophorum inveniat, in obsequium fidei assumit. Unde Augustinus dicit in 2 \textit{de doctrina Christiana}, quod si qua philosophi dixerunt fidei nostrae accommoda, non solum formidanda non sunt, sed ab eis tamquam ab injustis possessoribus in usum nostrum vindicanda. Et in 4 \textit{de doctrina Christiana} dicit: cum posita sit in medio facultas eloquii, quae ad persuadendum seu prava seu recta valent pluribus, cur non honorum studio comparetur ut militet veritati, si eam mali in usum iniquitatis et erroris usurpant.”

\textsuperscript{118} \textit{Ibid.} 2.6, n. 84: “de hominibus autem dicitur Bar. 3.16: ubi sunt principes gentium? Et postea subdit: exterminati sunt et ad Inferos descenderunt. Sicut ipsi non sunt stabiles, ita et eorum sapientia non potest esse firma: et ideo non ei innitendum est.” Cf. \textit{ibid.} 2.8, n. 89.
have given wisdom and sent your Holy Spirit from on high?” Indeed, “who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” (Isa 40.13, quoted at I Cor 2.16). For “God’s wisdom transcends all human ability,” and he “is the source of all knowledge.”

2. Paul also avoided the sapientia verbi of human wisdom in his preaching “lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power” (I Cor 1.17). In this locution he indicates that Christian teaching is oriented properly around “the chief element in the doctrines of the Christian faith,” namely, “salvation effected by the cross of Christ.” The effect is borne to the faithful by “the word of the cross” (I Cor 1.18), “the announcing of the cross,” whereby the very character of wisdom, as a “knowledge of divine things,” takes the form of Incarnation and passion, notwithstanding the protestations of those who “because of their lack of wisdom suppose that it is impossible for God to become man and suffer death in his human nature.” “Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, ... endured the

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119 Ibid. 2.7, n. 85: “describit eam quantum ad materiam vel auctoritatem, cum dicit sed loquimur Dei sapientiam, id est quae est Deus et a Deo. Quamvis enim omnis sapientia a Deo sit, ut dicitur Sir 1.1, tamen speciali quodam modo haec sapientia, quae est de Deo, est etiam a Deo per revelationem, secundum illud Wis 9.17: sensum autem tuum quis sciet, nisi tu dederis sapientiam et miseris spiritum tuum de altissimis?” Cf. ibid. 3.18-19, nn. 178-79 on the “true wisdom of God” (vera sapientia Dei), contrasted with the foolish “wisdom of this world.”


121 Ibid. 1.17, n. 45: “Principale autem in doctrina fidei Christianae est salus per crucem Christi facta.” Cf. similarly ibid. 1.26, n. 63.

122 Ibid. 1.18, n. 47: “Dicit ergo primo: ideo dixi quod si per sapientiam verbi doctrina fidei proponeretur, evacuaretur crucifix Christi, verbum enim crucis, id est annuntiatio crucis Christi, stultitia est.” Cf. ibid. 4.10, n. 212.
cross, disregarding its shame” (Heb 12.2). Where, then, “is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age?” (I Cor 1.20). “God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; what is weak in the world to shame the strong; what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God” (I Cor 1.27-29). On this account, Jesus himself thanks the Father “because you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to little ones” (Mt 11.25). Indeed, God “is like a teacher who recognizes that his meaning was not understood from the words he employed, and then tried to use other words to indicate what he meant,” and Christ’s disciples in turn “reach an understanding of the teacher’s wisdom by the words [they] hear from him.” Christ is thus “the power of God and the wisdom of God” (I Cor 1.24) by “appropriation,” since the Father “does all things through him” (see Jn 1.3), and “the

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123 Ibid. 1.19, nn. 49-50: “Differunt autem sapientia et prudentia. Nam sapientia est cognitio divinarum rerum; unde pertinet ad contemplationem, Iob 28.28: timor Dei ipsa est sapientia; prudentia vero proprie est cognitio rerum humanarum, unde dicitur Prov 10.23: sapientia est viro prudentia, quia scilicet scientia humanarum rerum prudentia dicitur.... Et ideo non dicit simpliciter perdam sapientiam, quia omnis sapientia a domino Deo est, ut dicitur Isa 29.14 ss. [Sir 1.1], sed perdam sapientiam sapientium, id est, quam sapientes huius mundi adinvenerunt sibi contra veram sapientiam Dei.... Et sic propter defectum sapientiae reputant impossibile Deum hominem fieri, mortem pati secundum humanam naturam; propter defectum autem prudentiae reputant inconveniens suisse quod homo sustineret crucem, confusione contempta, ut dicitur Heb 12.2.” Cf. the similar illustrative use of Proverbs 10.23 at ST I 1, 6 c.

124 See ibid. 1.20, nn. 51-52. Thomas connects this verse with Isaiah 33.18: “Where is the learned?” Cf. ibid. 1.27, n. 65: “Where then are your wise men?” (Is 19.12).

125 Ibid., n. 54: “Ubi sapiens? Quasi dicat: inter praedicatores fidei non invenitur. Mt 11.25: abscondisti haec a sapientibus et prudentibus, et revelasti ea parvulis.”

126 Ibid. 1.21, n. 55: “discipulus pervenit ad cognoscendum magistri sapientiam per verba quae ab ipso audit.... [E]st simile, sicut si aliquis magister considerans sensum suum ab auditorious non accipi, per verba quae protulit, studet alius verbis uti, per quae possibilit manifestare quae habet in corde.”
Word, which is the Son, is nothing less than begotten or conceived wisdom: ‘I came forth from the mouth of the Most High’ (Sir 24.5).”\textsuperscript{127}

3. In this Word “are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2.3), “both in terms of the fullness of his Godhead and the fullness of his wisdom and grace and in terms of the profound reasons of the Incarnation,” explains Aquinas. Paul does not however begin with this astonishing fact, which is “hidden,” in the idiom of Colossians. Instead, he begins with what is “more obvious and lowly in Christ Jesus,” hence he adds: “and him crucified” (I Cor 2.2), “as if to say: I have presented myself to you as though I know nothing but the cross of Christ.” Hence Galatians 6.14: “far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”\textsuperscript{128}

Paul’s decision is not accidental but pedagogical, with far reaching consequences, in Thomas’s view. As we know, Christian teaching will not proceed in “plausible” or persuasive “words of wisdom” (I Cor 2.4), nor in any way imply that it “rests on philosophical reasoning.”\textsuperscript{129} The word of Christian teaching can only be confirmed by

\textsuperscript{127} \textit{Ibid.} 1.24, n. 61: “Dicitur autem Dei virtus et Dei sapientia per quamdam appropriationem. Virtus quidem, inquantum per eum pater omnia operatur, Jn 1.3: \textit{omnia per ipsum facta sunt}, sapientia vero, inquantum ipsum verbum, quod est filius, nihil est aliud quam sapientia genita vel concepta. Sir 24.5: \textit{ego ex ore altissimi prodii ante omnem creaturam.” Cf. \textit{ibid.} 2.2, n. 75.

\textsuperscript{128} \textit{Ibid.} 2.2, n. 75: “In Christo autem Iesu, ut dicitur Col 2.3, sunt \textit{omnes thesauri sapientiae et scientiae Dei absconditi}, et quantum ad plenitudinem deitatis et quantum ad plenitudinem sapientiae et gratiae, et etiam quantum ad profundas incarnationis rationes, quae tamen apostolus eis non annuntiavit sed solum ea quae erant manifestiora et inferiora in Christo Iesu. Et ideo subdit \textit{et hunc crucifixum}, quasi dicat: sic vobis me exhibui ac si nihil aliud scirem quam crucem Christi. Unde Gal. ult. dicit: \textit{mihi absit gloriari, nisi in cruce domini nostri Iesu Christi}.” Cf. \textit{In Col} 2.3, n. 82 for the reverse procedure: “Let us suppose that a person has a candle that is covered; he would not look then for another light, but wait for the light he has to become uncovered. And in the same way we do not have to look for wisdom anywhere but in Christ: ‘For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified’ (I Cor 2.2).”

\textsuperscript{129} \textit{Ibid.} 2.4, n. 77: “supra dixit quod non fuit intentionis quod sua praedicatio niteretur philosophicis rationibus.”
“the Spirit and power,” as Paul says, and in this sense it is a wisdom, a “profound doctrine,” for “the mature” (I Cor 2.4, 6). Thus, “solid food is for the perfect, for those who have their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil” (Heb 5.14).

And “since the teachings of the faith are aimed at making faith work through love (Gal 5.6), it is necessary that a person instructed in the teachings of the faith not only be well-disposed in intellect for accepting and believing the truth but also well-disposed in will for loving and doing good works.”

Here is the scriptural source and syntax of the Dionysian ideal of I 1, 6 ad 3 (non solum discens sed et patiens divina), in the cradle of Paul’s spiritual challenge to the Corinthians, repeated by Thomas in the prologue of the Summa: “as infants in Christ, I fed you with milk, not solid food” (I Cor 3.1-2). Previously, at I Corinthians 2.13, Paul “had said that the apostles delivered spiritual things to spiritual persons.” The Corinthians, however, were “barely introduced to the perfect teachings of the faith,” for

130 Ibid. 2.6, n. 81: “Dicit ergo: apud vos solum Christum crucifixum praedicavi, sapientiam autem, id est profundam doctrinam, loquimur inter perfectos.” Cf. I Cor 2.13: “we speak in words not taught by human wisdom but by the Spirit,” that is, “we do not try to prove our doctrine with words drawn from human wisdom” (ibid. 2.13, n. 109).

131 Ibid.: “Dicuntur autem perfecti intellectu illi, quorum mens elevata est super omnia carnalia et sensabilia, qui spiritualia et intelligibilia capere possunt, de quibus dicitur Heb 5.14: perfectorum est solidus cibus, eorum qui per consuetudinem exercitatos habent sensus ad discretionem mali et boni.... Quia igitur doctrina fidei ad hoc ordinatur, ut fides per dilectionem operetur, ut habetur Gal 5.6, necesse est eum qui in doctrina fidei instruitur, non solum secundum intellectum bene disponi ad capiendum et credendum sed etiam secundum voluntatem et affectum bene disponi ad diligendum et operandum.” Cf. ibid 3.15, n. 157: “when one builds [on the foundation] gold, silver, and precious stones, he builds upon the foundation of faith those things which pertain to contemplating the wisdom of divine matters (sapientiae divinorum), to loving God, to performing devout exercises, to helping [one’s] neighbor and performing virtuous works.”

On the other hand, “those who add to the faith laid down by the apostles doctrines that are useless, unclear or not supported by true reasons, but vain and empty, erect wood, hay and stubble; hence Jeremiah 23.28: ‘Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? says the Lord’” (ibid., n. 160).

132 Ibid. 3.1, n. 123: “Dixerat enim supra quod apostoli quidem spiritualia documenta spiritualibus tradebant.”
“everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness,” as a child (Heb 5.12), “not ready to grasp spiritual words.” This need not imply culpability; Jesus for instance remarked to his disciples that “I have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now” (Jn 16.12). But Paul laments that the Corinthians are still “not ready for solid food..., for you are still of the flesh” (I Cor 3.2-3),

as if to say: it was not strange that in the beginning you were unable to grasp a fuller teaching, because this was expected of your newness: “As newborn babes, desire the rational milk without guile” (I Pt 2.2). But it seems sinful that in spite of the time during which you could have made progress, you still show the same incapacity: “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need some one to teach you again the first principles of God’s word” (Heb 5.12).

For this reason Paul begins again with “the word of the cross,” which “to us who are being saved is the power of God” (I Cor 1.18), a power that the faithful “experience in themselves when together with Christ they die to their vices and concupiscences, as it says in Galations 5.24: ‘Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” This follows from the Baptism of the faithful, itself a death, which issues in a call to suffer after the example of Christ, a point that Paul established as

133 Ibid. 3.1-2, nn. 124-25: “tamquam parvulis in Christo, id est, parum adhuc introductis in perfectam doctrinam fidei, quae spiritualibus debetur. Heb 5.13: omnis qui lactis est particeps, expers est sermonis iustitiae; parvulus enim est: perfectorum autem est solidus cibus.... Unde subditur nondum enim poteratis, quasi dicat: ...verba spiritualia nondum bene poteratis capere, secundum illud Jn 16.12: adhuc multa habeo vobis dicere, sed non potestis portare modo.”

134 Ibid. 3.2, n. 126: “quasi dicat: quod a principio perfectam doctrinam capere non poteratis, non mirum fuit, quia hoc nescire vestrae novitati competebat, secundum illud I Pet 2.2: sicut modo geniti infantes lac concupiscite. Sed hoc videtur esse culpabile, quod post tantum tempus in quo proficere debuistis, eamdem impotentiam retinetis, secundum illud Heb 5.12: cum deberetis magistri esse propter tempus, rursus indigetis doceri, quae sunt elementa sermonum Dei.”

135 Ibid. 1.18, n. 47: “Item virtutem quam in seipsis experiuntur, dum simul cum Christo vitii et concupiscentiis moriuntur, secundum illud Gal 5.24: qui Christi sunt, carnem suam crucifixerunt cum vitiiis et concupiscentiis.”
the frame for his subsequent discussion of the crucified word of wisdom. But the
“speaking” of that word remains perpetually sacramental—secret or “hidden”—as Paul
says (I Cor 2.7), on several counts. First, his “method of teaching” suits this revealed
doctrine because it is spoken “in a mystery,” “in secret words or signs,” the spiritual
mysteries of I Corinthians 14.2.136 These are the mysteries that the apostles are called to
steward as “servants of Christ” (I Cor 4.1), namely, “his spiritual teachings” or “the
sacraments of the Church, in which divine power secretly works salvation; hence in the
formula for consecrating the Eucharist it is said: ‘a mystery of faith.’”137 Second, as the
latter quotation implies, the Eucharist in particular stands as an end of Paul’s argument;
“for as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until
he comes” (I Cor 11.26).138 God “made” him our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification,
and redemption (I Cor 1.30), so that we may “adhere to” and “partake of” him, and so be
“joined to God.”139 In this way, the initial stages of Paul’s argument—and of Thomas’s

136 Ibid. 2.7, n. 86: “Et quia modus docendi et doctrinae debet esse conveniens, ideo dicitur quod
loquitur eam in mysterio, id est in aliquo occulto, vel verbo vel signo. Infra 14.2: spiritus loquitur
mysteria.”

137 Ibid. 4.1, n. 186: “et dispensatores mysteriorum Dei, id est, secretorum eius, quae quidem sunt
spiritualia eius documenta, secundum illud infra 14.2: spiritus est, qui loquitur mysteria; vel etiam
ecclesiastica sacramenta, in quibus divina virtus secretius operatur salutem. Unde et in forma consecrationis
Eucharistiae dicitur: mysterium fidei.” Cf. analogously ibid. 2.12, nn. 105-07 with reference to the “secreta
divinitatis,” seen by the Spirit, and bestowed to us in turn as “gifts,” according to Revelation 2.17: “to him
that conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, which no one knows except him who receives it”
(Vincenti dabo manna absconditum, quod nemo scit, nisi qui accipit).

138 Ibid. 1.23, n. 58: “concludit quare verbum crucis sit eis stultitia, dicens nos autem praedicamus
Christum crucifixum, secundum illud infra cap. 11.26: mortem domini annuntiabitis donec veniat.” Thomas
handles this text only fleetingly at ibid. 11.26, n. 686.

139 Ibid. 1.30, n. 71: “primo... dicit qui, scilicet Christus, factus est nobis praedicantibus fidem, et,
per nos, omnibus fidelibus, sapientia, quia ei inhaerendo, qui est Dei sapientia, et participando ipsum per
gratiam.... Secundo,...dicit et justitia... Tertio... subdit et sanctificatio, et redemptio. Sanctificamur enim
per Christum, inquantum per eum Deoconiungimur.”
argument after him—serve as an ascetical curriculum of divine wisdom the following of which prepares the reader for a particular end in and after Christ the Word.\textsuperscript{140}

\textsuperscript{140} Thus Thomas-cum-Paul comes to the Eucharist at ch. 8ff. via matrimony in ch. 5: “In sacramentis autem tria sunt consideranda. Primo quidem ipsum sacramentum, sicut Baptismus; secundo id quod est res significata et contenita, scilicet gratia; tertio id quod est res significata et non contenita, scilicet gloria resurrectionis. Primo ergo agit de ipsis sacramentis; secundo de ipsis gratuitis, 12 cap. de spiritualibus autem nolo vos facio. Circa primum tria facit. Primo determinat ea quae pertinent ad sacramentum Baptismi; secundo ea quae pertinent ad sacramentum matrimonii, 5 cap., ibi omnino auditur inter vos, etc.; tertio ea quae pertinent ad sacramentum Eucharistiae, 8 cap., ibi de his autem quae idolis sacrificantur” (In I Cor 1.10, n. 19). Cf. as an analogue to the foregoing argument Thomas’s commentary on Hebrews 5 (and surrounding chapters), with frequent reference to I Corinthians. Children ought not to be taught first of all “the highest teaching” but be led “little by little” (In Heb 1.3, n. 44: “apostolus in loco isto tenet modum volentis instruere parvulum, qui non statim proponit ei summa, sed paulatim perducit eum, modo loquendo ardua, modo proponendo infima”). As Augustine explained, this does not mean that “some things are to be handed on to the perfect, and others to the imperfect. For there is not this difference between them. The same things are to be handed on to each, but to children they are to be proposed, not explained or studied thoroughly, since their intellects would more fall away than be lifted up” (ibid. 5.13, n. 270: secundum Augustinum, quod non est intelligendum, quod in doctrina fidei alia sunt tradenda maioribus et perfectis, et alia imperfectis. Non enim est inter eos ista differentia. Eadem enim utrisque sunt tradenda, sed parvulis proponenda sunt, sed non exponenda, nec pertractanda: quia intellectus eorum magis deficeret, quam elevaretur). Having learned, however, “the word of the beginning of Christ” (sermonem inchoationis doctrinae Christi), we may “be carried on to things more perfect,” that is, “to those things which look to the perfection of the doctrine of Christ,” according to I Corinthians. Children ought not to be taught first of all “the highest teaching” but be led “little by little” (ibid. 6.1, n. 276; cf. ibid. 5.13, n. 272, citing I Cor 14.20: “do not be children in your thinking”). Finally, therefore, the “strong meat” of Hebrews 5.12-14 is a “high doctrine... of the arcane and secret things of God” (ibid. 5.12, n. 267: alta doctrina, quae est de arcanis et secretis Dei, cross-referencing I Cor 3.1-2), and so is “for the perfect,” as Paul says, in a twofold spiritual sense, intellectually and affectively. “For the doctrine of sacred scripture has not only things to be pondered, as in geometry, but also to be approved through the affection” (habet sacrae Scripturae doctrina, quod in ipsa non tantum traduntur speculanda, sicut in geometria, sed etiam approbanda per affectum), according to our Lord’s instruction both to do and to teach the commandments (Mt 5.19), and again, I Corinthians 2.6: that “the higher mysteries (alta mysteria) are to be spoken to the perfect” (ibid. 5.14, n. 273; cf. n. 276 for another citation of I Cor 2.6). Here again Thomas employs the Dionysian syntax of ST I 1, 6 ad 3 (as also at ibid. 12.3, n. 667, quoting Augustine: “The cross was not only the gibbet of the sufferer, but the cathedra of the teacher” [crux non solum fuit patibulum patientis; sed etiam cathedra docentis], and ibid. 13.7, n. 738: “They not only preached the word, but also showed it by their examples. Mk 16.20: Confirming the word with signs that followed”) to the same ascetical end, namely, to encourage the faithful to “sense” God, and so “have the mind of Christ” (I Cor 2.16), who “learned obedience by the things which he suffered” (Heb 5.8), a point that follows from the distinction between “simple” knowledge (simplicis notitiae) and knowledge by “experience” (scientia experientiae) (ibid. 5.14 and 5.8, nn. 274 and 259).
III. Word and figure in sacra doctrina (Q. 1, aa. 8-10)

To return to the first question of the *Summa* in light of the foregoing is to understand more fully the extent to which Thomas has compressed the structure of the entire work into its first ten articles, albeit in a pedagogically appropriate manner for beginning students who are not yet “ready for solid food” (I Cor 3.2).

I 1, 8 rejoins and further specifies Aquinas’s answer to a recurring question in sacred doctrine concerning its relation to one and another textual authority or science. Articles 1 and 2 taught that sacred doctrine or theology is a scriptural science of salvific truth, necessarily revealed because its subject matter, God, is above and beyond the ken of ordinary or natural human knowing. Sacred doctrine also uses other sciences, however, as “inferior” interlocutors and “handmaidens,” article 5 continued, because human understanding “is more easily led by what is known through natural reason... to that which is above reason;”¹⁴¹ or, stated more theologically, as in article 8: “Since grace does not destroy nature but perfects it, natural reason should minister to faith as the natural bent of the will ministers to charity.”¹⁴² A further task of differentiation thus suggests itself, in terms of distinguishing the relative authority of the non-scriptural texts that sacred doctrine must inevitably employ in its argumentative engagements.

The *sed contra* frames the problem by referring to Scripture’s own consciousness of the need for further words of elaboration and defense—Paul’s statement to Titus that a

¹⁴¹ 1, 5 ad 2: “inferioribus et ancillis.”

¹⁴² 1, 8 ad 2.
bishop “must have a firm grasp of the faithful word in accordance with doctrine, so that he may be able to exhort in sound doctrine and convince those who contradict it.” Here Thomas builds on article 7’s recognition that theology denotes verbal reflection about God, “sermo de Deo.” Indeed, Paul himself “argued from the resurrection of Christ to prove the general resurrection” in I Corinthians 15. A fundamental fact about sacred doctrine, however, is that Scripture “has no superior above itself,” that is, its revealed principles are basic for the reasoning procedure of subsequent argument. Accordingly, canonical Scripture is used as a “necessary” source of truth, whereas “the authority of the doctors of the Church” is “properly” used, “yet merely as probable,” and the arguments of philosophical authors may be invoked lastly as “extrinsic and probable” authorities. In this way, the primary text and commentary upon it are ordered hierarchically with respect to one another; even as, again, Scripture points beyond itself to the very “knowledge of God,” as Paul says (in a text already quoted by Thomas in article 6), so that “every thought may be taken captive in obedience to Christ” (II Cor 10.5).

Having explained to his students the hierarchy of authorities in sacred doctrine, Thomas is able to elaborate in articles 9 and 10 the textual, and specifically scriptural, means to the end of the earlier enunciated Dionysian theme: knowledge about and experience of God.

143 1, 8 sc.
144 1, 7 sc.
145 1, 8 c.
146 Ibid.
147 1, 8 ad 2.
As we know from articles 1 and 6, Scripture “hands on divine and spiritual things” for an entirely practical purpose, namely, human salvation. And we know that the Corinthian character of sacred doctrine subsists in a curriculum of holiness in the school of Christ, a challenge to grow up into spiritual persons who “have the mind of Christ” (I Cor 2.16), capable of speaking “the word about the cross” which is the power and wisdom of God (1.18ff.). On this account, Thomas naturally defends in article 9 the fittingness of Scripture’s teaching “spiritual things under the likeness of material things.” As Dionysius wrote, in words reminiscent of Colossians 2.3 (the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden in Christ): “We cannot be enlightened by the divine rays except they be hidden within the covering of many sacred veils.” Thus Scripture bears “spiritual things under the likeness of corporeal things,” continues Aquinas, “in order that thereby even the simple who are unable by themselves to grasp intellectual things may be able to understand them.” Moreover, in this way, (i) “human minds are better preserved from error,” as it will be clear that divine and sensible things are qualitatively different (secundum proprietatem); (ii) we attain a “truer estimate” of God’s dissimilarity from that which we know; (iii) and divine things are usefully “hidden from the unworthy.”

Similarly, Scripture may have several senses or layers of meaning, Thomas explains in article 10, for the reason that God, the author of Scripture, may wish to

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148 1, 9 c, quoting Cel. Hier. 1. Cf. the further citations of Dionysius at 1, 9 ad 2 and ad 3.
signify more than one thing, even in a single passage (littera). As Gregory wrote, the locutions of Scripture “transcend every science, because in one and the same word (sermone), while it describes a fact, it reveals a mystery.” Indeed, God communicates at once by words (voces) and by things. The first sense of a given word of Scripture is its “historical or literal” sense, but the same word may secondarily communicate a range of “spiritual” meanings, “based upon and presupposing” the literal. Thus Paul taught that “the old law is a figure of the new law” (see Heb 10.1), and Dionysius adds that “the new law is itself a figure of future glory.” Moreover, “in the new law, whatever our Head has done are signs of what we ought to do.” On this basis, we may identify in Scripture an allegorical sense (tying old and new together), a moral sense (following on the exemplarity of Christ and all that signifies him), and an anagogical sense (regarding the end of “eternal glory”).


151 1, 10 sc, quoting Moral. 20.

152 1, 10 c, quoting Eccl. hier. Cf. 1, 10 ad 1: “multiplicitas horum sensuum non facit aequivocationem, aut aliam speciem multiplicatatis, quia, sicut iam dictum est, sensus isti non multiplicatatur propter hoc quod una vox multa significet; sed quia ipsae res significatae per voces, aliarum rerum possunt esse signa. Et ita etiam nulla confusio sequitur in sacra Scriptura, cum omnes sensus fundentur super unum, scilicet litteralem; ex quo solo potest trahi argumentum, non autem ex his quae secundum allegoriam dicuntur, ut dicit Augustinus in epistola contra Vincentium Donatistam.” On the anti-
Thomas thus defends in these articles God’s use of scriptural words and things to communicate and enact a particular end in Christ. The principle is fundamental to the whole of the *Summa*, and particularly lays the groundwork for the sacramental theology of the *tertia pars*, which also employs a distinction between words and things, assimilating the latter to the determinative and perfective primacy of the former. On this account, Thomas concludes at III 60 that the words of sacred Scripture and sacramental words, while different in important respects, are of equal “importance,” for in both cases “spiritual things are set before us under the guise of sensible things”—an argument, he notes again (as at I 1, 9 and 10), made by Dionysius in book 1 of *Celestial Hierarchy*. And Thomas’s recurring use of Hebrews 10.1 (as at I 1, 10) in the questions on the Eucharist in particular also underlines a unifying theme of the work as a whole: the comprehensive ambit of Christ as sign-maker, “the very image of things to come,” beyond the former figures or shadows. “He is the image of the invisible God”

Joachimite aspect of Thomas’s argument, here—emphasizing the primacy of the literal sense for theological argument—see George H. Tavard, *The Contemplative Church: Joachim and His Adversaries* (Milwaukee: Marquette UP, 2005), pp. 84-85.

153 See esp. III 60, 6 c in light of 60, 3: sacraments signify the experience of sanctification as a conformity to the passion of the Word.

154 III 60, 8 obj 1, in an assertion that the response to the objection leaves untouched.

155 III 60, 4 c: “since the sacred things (*res sacrae*) which are signified by the sacraments are the spiritual and intelligible goods by means of which human beings are sanctified, it follows that the sacramental signs consist in sensible things; just as in divine Scripture spiritual things are set before us under the guise of sensible things. Hence it is that sensible things are required for the sacraments, as Dionysius also proves in book 1 of *Celestial Hierarchy.*” Cf. III 60, 5 ad 1: “God signifies spiritual things to us by means of the sensible things in the sacraments, and by the verbal similitudes (*verba similitudinaria*) of Scripture.”

156 III 75, 1 c; 83, 1 c.
(Col 1.15) “and the figure of his substance, upholding all things by his powerful word” (Heb 1.3).\textsuperscript{157}

In this way, Thomas’s students are reminded at the end of ST I 1 of the point with which the question began: that the scriptural form of sacred doctrine is ordered to a salvific completion, the Dionysian “figure of future glory,” itself following the “signs” of Christ as Head.\textsuperscript{158} All of sacred doctrine, like all of Scripture, is redolent and anticipatory of Christ’s first and last utterance, his living and active word, in the idiom of Hebrews 4.12.

\textsuperscript{157} Thomas connects Colossians 1.15 and Hebrews 1.3 at I 35, 2 c and at In Col 1.15, n. 32 and In Heb 1.3, n. 27. Cf. In Heb 10.1, n. 480 and In I Cor 11.1, n. 583. These texts from the lectura on St Paul, and the ones cited in the four preceding notes from the \textit{tertia pars}, are discussed in chs. 6-7 of the present study.

\textsuperscript{158} Again, 1, 10 c.
CHAPTER 3:

“FROM GOD I PROCEEDED” (JN 8.42): THE PERSON OF THE WORD IN ST I

The prima pars of the *Summa* binds together the foundation of Christian theology—the doctrine of God as one and three—and anthropology, because God and human beings are the principal actors with which Christian doctrine is concerned. The movement from the former to the latter is however causal, since human beings are patterned after the triune God. As we learned at I 1, 7, sacred doctrine takes God as its subject and relates “all things” to him “as their beginning and end.” And this is also clear, continues Thomas, “from the principles of this science, namely, the articles of faith, which are about God.” In its review of these facts, the prologue of I 2 effectively reveals the creedal structure of the *Summa* as a whole:

the principal intention of this sacred doctrine is to hand on knowledge of God, not only as he is in himself, but also as he is the beginning and end of things, and especially of rational creatures, as is clear from what has already been said. Therefore, in our expositing of this doctrine, we intend to treat first of God,

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159 Of course, all creatures are similarly patterned, including angels, to which Thomas devotes fifteen questions in the *prima pars*, questions 150-64. On the more general principle of divine government, see question 105.

160 I 1, 7 c.
second of the advance of rational creatures toward God, and third of Christ who, as man, is our way to God.\textsuperscript{161}

At first glance, the reader might suppose that by the second enumerated matter Thomas means the anthropology of the \textit{prima pars}, but in fact he intends the \textit{secunda pars}, as the immediately following sentence of the prologue attests: “In treating of God, there will be a threefold division: first, we shall consider what pertains to the divine essence, second, what pertains to the distinction of persons, and third, what pertains to the procession of creatures from him.”\textsuperscript{162} The \textit{Summa’s} anthropology is thus appropriated to God as the origin of creaturely life.

All that Thomas will say about the relation of human beings to God follows from this structural aid. To learn about the trinitarian God is to begin to understand the “order of the discipline”\textsuperscript{163} of theology and its practical purpose, as enunciated in question 1: that human beings come to know and experience God in Christ, and be saved. This is the end of our knowledge of God, in the idiom of both ST I 1, 1 and I 2 prologue. And it is why Thomas tends to the compounding layers of theological language—from God,

\footnotesize{161 ST prologue: “ea quae sunt necessaria… ad sciemendum non traduntur secundum ordinem disciplinae, sed secundum quod requirerebat librorum expositio, vel secundum quod se praebet occasio disputandi.” Cf. Chenu, \textit{Toward Understanding St. Thomas}, trans. with corrections and additions by A.-M. Landry and D. Hughes (Chicago: H. Regnery Co., 1964), p. 300ff. Torrell renders \textit{secundum ordinem disciplinae} as “according to the demands of the subject itself,” and then, several lines later, \textit{ordo disciplinae} as “order of knowing” (\textit{STA II}, p. 54). Thomas Gilby, in the Blackfriars translation, renders \textit{ordo disciplinae} as “a sound educational method” (vol. 1, p. 3), while the English Dominicans translate it more literally as “the order of the subject matter” (p. xix).}
through Scripture, to the discipline of theology, to the prayers of the faithful, and back again, “via” Christ.\textsuperscript{164}

\section*{I. Ordering the trinitarian Word (QQ. 2-43)}

Aquinas introduces the person of the Word formally in his treatise \textit{De deo trino}, beginning with question 27. Questions 2-26 may read as an introduction to the subsequent discussion, however, insofar as Thomas lays the foundation in the earlier questions for his principal claims about the Word, claims that order the Christology of the \textit{Summa} as a whole. These claims, stated systematically, are (i) that the Christian life aims at union with God in Christ, and (ii) that God provides the means to this end through the incarnate Word. Each may be taken in turn.

1. As is well-known, Aquinas challenges his students in questions 3-11 to engage in a courageous act of unknowing. God’s unattainability by natural reason is a most basic assumption of the \textit{Summa}, having been introduced in the very first article. Sacred doctrine thus proceeds under the formality of the revealed. And yet Thomas presumes that the traditional exercise of trying to articulate philosophically God’s difference from creatures is salutary for beginning students of theology—as milk before solid food, and as a Dionysian ascesis of knowing and speaking that may begin to form the mind after the word of the cross, an altogether different science and wisdom for “those who believe” (I

\textsuperscript{164} Again, I 2 prologue. I return to the question of the structure of the \textit{Summa} and its theological orientation in the Conclusion of the present study.
Cor 1.21). Presuming that God exists, therefore (question 2), Thomas reflects for the next nine questions on how God “is not,” under the headings of simplicity, perfection, goodness, infinity, immutability, eternity, and unity.

That the exercise forms a part of the pedagogy of Christian theology may be seen by the constant quotation of Scripture, and also by the occasional reference to fundamental Christian truths, including that God is a trinity of persons. In terms of the Word, Thomas first mentions him in the *Summa* at I 3, 8, in a quotation of Augustine, sermon 38: that “the word of God, which is God, is an uncreated form.” The Word is moreover “an exemplar form, not a form that is part of a compound,” for God is not a composite of things but simple. And yet God “is said to be in the saints by grace,” who know and love him, actually or habitually, notes Aquinas several questions later; and there is also “another special mode of God’s existence in man by union, which will be treated of in its own place,” in the *tertia pars*. On both counts, “the blessed” (with the angels) “enjoy the Word,” to see whom is to have eternal life, as he himself said as incarnate of the Father: “This is eternal life, that they may know you the only true God”

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165 See the argument of the preceding chapter, esp. sec. II: “The word of the cross: Sacrament and doctrine in I Corinthians 1-3.”

166 3 prologue. Dionysius is cited as an authority in most of these questions, often more than once, and especially in questions 12-13, on which see below. For I Corinthians, see 11, 3 obj 1; 12, 7 obj 1; 12, 11 obj 1; 12, 13 sc. On the force of Thomas’s five arguments for the existence of God in question 2, see Fergus Kerr, *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), ch. 4. For a general characterization of questions 3-11, see David Burrell, “God’s Eternity,” *Faith and Philosophy*, 1/4 (1984), 389-406.

167 3, 8 obj 2 (quoting *De verb. dom.*) and ad 2.

168 8, 3 c and ad 4.
In this case, to have “seen the Word” will be to have seen God’s essence all at once, not successively; “now we see in a glass in a dark manner, but then face to face” (I Cor 13.12). Meanwhile, we can in this life, “by the revelation of grace” and by faith, be united to God “as to one unknown,” following on “the vision of he who is believed;” “what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor human heart conceived... God has revealed to us through the Spirit” (I Cor 2.9-10).

2. The Corinthian strand of the last several quotations is drawn from question 12, on the knowledge of God by creatures. If, on the basis of his actions and teaching as recorded in Scripture, beatitude may be characterized as union with the eternal and incarnate Word of God, then the way to knowledge and experience of him becomes a matter of necessary interest for sacred doctrine. And, according to question 13, it naturally leads to reflection on language, as the means of human reflection on and approach to God.

Thomas first articulates his understanding of language in article 1 of question 13, borrowing a page from Aristotle’s *Peri Hermeneias* (= *De Interpretatione*): since “words are signs of ideas, and ideas the similitude of things, it is evident that words relate to the meaning of things signified through the medium of the intellectual conception. It follows therefore that we can give a name to anything insofar as we can understand it.”

169 10, 3 c, quoting Augustine, *De trin.* 15.
170 12, 10 c and 12, 11 obj 1.
171 12, 13 ad 1 and ad 3.
172 12, 13 sc, recalling I 1, 1 c. Cf. I 14, 2 sc for a quotation of I Cor 2.11.
173 13, 1 c. Cf. 12, 9 c: “each thing is known insofar as its likeness is in the one who knows.”
point holds true, as Thomas will argue, for both divine and human knowing; but the first lesson to be drawn, in keeping with the negative pedagogy of human knowing and speaking of God, is that because “we cannot in this life see the essence of God,” as argued in question 12, we must be content to know and name him by creatures and not by “the divine essence.” At this level, it is true to say that “God has no name, or is said to be above being named,” as Dionysius says, “because his essence is above all that we understand about him and signify in word (voce).”

Many have written on this matter in Aquinas, and noted the influence of Dionysius, who is cited more than any other Christian authority in question 13, save Scripture. Thomas also depended upon Dionysius in question 12, for the point that “the essence of God cannot be seen by any created similitude,” since the two belong to different orders, incoproreal and corporeal. God’s essence, which is his existence, is “uncircumscribed, and contains in itself supereminently whatever can be signified or understood by the created intellect.” Short of the “light of glory,” therefore—according to Psalm 35.10: “In your light we shall see light”—the human “mode of signification”

174 Ibid.

175 13, 1 ad 1, in reply to the quotation of Dionysius (De div. nom. 1) in the objection.


177 12, 2 c, quoting De div. nom. 1.

178 Ibid.

179 Ibid.
must content itself with names for God that “do not properly and strictly apply” to him but to creatures, since this is how we first know them.\textsuperscript{180} For we naturally know that which has its form in matter, “or what can be known by such a form.”\textsuperscript{181}

And yet God’s names do signify him “imperfectly,” since they name perfections that are truly his,\textsuperscript{182} “though our lips can only stammer, we yet chant the high things of God,” as Gregory wrote.\textsuperscript{183} The point strikes to the heart of Thomas’s decision to treat human knowing and naming of God under the locus \textit{De Deo uno}: because “the perfections of all things must pre-exist in God in a more eminent way,” who is “the first effective cause of things.” “It is not that he is this and not that, but that he is all, as the cause of all,” wrote Dionysius.\textsuperscript{184} That is, God is “essential being, whereas other things are beings by participation,” sharing in God’s existence by analogy,\textsuperscript{185} and imitating him, “who is not perfectly imitable,” as they are able.\textsuperscript{186} Accordingly, some of God’s names, the non-metaphorical ones such as “being, good, living, and the like,” are applied to him “not only as cause but essentially,” because they “properly” signify his perfections.\textsuperscript{187} The words “\textit{God is good} or wise,” for instance, “signify not only that he is the cause of

\textsuperscript{180} 13, 3 c and 6 c.
\textsuperscript{181} 12, 11 c.
\textsuperscript{182} 13, 2 c. Cf. 13, 6 c and 13, 9 ad 3: “These names ‘good,’ ‘wise,’ and the like, are imposed from the perfections proceeding from God to creatures; but they do not signify the divine nature, but rather signify the perfections themselves absolutely; and therefore they are in truth communicable to many.”
\textsuperscript{183} 4, 1 ad 1, quoting \textit{Moral.} 5.26, 29.
\textsuperscript{184} 4, 2 c, quoting \textit{De div. nom.} 5.
\textsuperscript{185} 4, 3 ad 3.
\textsuperscript{186} 4, 3 ad 1, quoting \textit{De div. nom.} 9.
\textsuperscript{187} 13, 3 ad 1 and 6 c.
wisdom or goodness but that these exist in him in a more excellent way. Hence, insofar as the name signifies a thing (*quantum ad rem significatam per nomen*), these names are applied primarily to God rather than to creatures, because these perfections flow from God to creatures.\(^\text{188}\)

The conclusion of question 13: that God perfectly norms all knowledge and language, serves as a pivot upon which Thomas shifts from God’s “substance” to the next eleven questions on God’s “operation.”\(^\text{189}\) These questions are organized under the headings of knowledge, will, and power, and they continue the rudimentary introduction to God’s difference from creatures as a preparation for the trinitarian completion of question 27 and following. For our purposes, question 14 on God’s knowledge is the most important.

“In God is the most perfect knowledge,” begins Aquinas, because his knowing “occupies the highest place in knowledge,” as “substance and pure act.”\(^\text{190}\) This is so because all things participate in God’s existence, whence “God has nothing in him of potentiality.” “His intellect and its object are altogether the same,” so that the “intelligible species”—whatever is understood—is identical with his intellect. In this way, “God understands himself through himself,”\(^\text{191}\) and “all things are naked and open to his eyes,” according to Hebrews 4—“even to the division of the soul and the spirit, the joints and the marrow. He discards the thought and intentions of the heart, and no creature is

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\(^{188}\) 13, 6 c.

\(^{189}\) 14 prologue.

\(^{190}\) 14, 1 c and ad 1.

\(^{191}\) 14, 2 c.
invisible in his sight.”192 Finally, the knowledge of God is also “the cause of things,” as an artist “works by his intellect” (which is “the principle of action,” pending “an inclination to an effect” through the will).193

Of course, the Hebrews text appropriates these divine actions to “the Word of God” who is “living and active,” “to whom we must render an account” (Heb 4.12-13).194 It is unsurprising, therefore, that the beginning of Thomas’s discussion of procession in God in question 27 rejoins and completes the argument of question 14 in particular.

As he began in question 13 with comments about language in general, Thomas begins question 27 with general reflections about procession. Most basically, “procession always supposes action,” either external or internal, and this is true of intellectual activity, as well. Aquinas writes:

> whenever we understand, by the very fact of understanding there proceeds something within us, which is a conception of the object understood, a conception issuing from our intellectual power and proceeding from our knowledge of that object. This conception is signified by the spoken word (vox), and it is called the word of the heart (verbum cordis), signified by the word of the voice (verbo vocis).195

Analogously, in the case of God, who is pure intellect, procession occurs as an “intelligible emanation, for example, of the intelligible word which proceeds from the

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192 14, 5 sc and 6 sc. Cf. analogously 18, 4 sc: “What was made in him was life (Jn 1.3-4). But all things were made except God. Therefore all things are life in God.”
193 14, 8 c.
194 See the discussion of Thomas’s commentary on this text at the beginning of ch. 1 of the present study.
195 27, 1 c.
speaker, yet remains in him."\textsuperscript{196} “The divine understanding is the very supreme perfection of God,” as argued at 14, 2, hence “the divine Word is of necessity perfectly one with the source from which he proceeds, without any kind of diversity.”\textsuperscript{197} Such a procession in God is also similar to the act of origination or birth common to all living things, and in this sense may be called \emph{generation}. The Word does not, however, “proceed from potentiality to act,” since it always existed, and because, again, God’s understanding and existence are the same.\textsuperscript{198} Likewise, the human act of understanding “is not the substance of the intellect,” so that our words are not of the same nature as their source; whereas in God his understanding and substance are identical, and the Word subsists in these, whence it properly is called begotten and Son. In Scripture, for instance, the procession of divine Wisdom is likened to conception and birth, as at Proverbs 8.24-25: “When there were no depths, I was already conceived...; before the hills, I was brought forth.”\textsuperscript{199} And again, by our Lord’s own testimony at John 8.42: “From God I proceeded.”\textsuperscript{200}

For our purposes, it is important to note as well Aquinas’s argument for a second procession in God following the generation of the Word, namely, a procession of love (\textit{amor}), which is an act of the will.\textsuperscript{201} In the case of human willing, we cannot love

\textsuperscript{196} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{197} 27, 1 ad 2.


\textsuperscript{199} 27, 2 ad 2. Cf. 32, 1 ad 2: “Similitudo autem intellectus nostri non sufficienter probat aliquid de Deo, propter hoc quod intellectus non univoce inventur in Deo et in nobis;” Paissac, \textit{Théologie du Verbe}, p. 225 note 3.

\textsuperscript{200} 27, 1 sc.

\textsuperscript{201} 27, 3.
something unless we know it; and while in God intellect and will are the same due to his simplicity, they should nonetheless be distinguished similarly, in terms of “ratio” and “order.” The intellect is “actualized” as it understands a given object “according to its own likeness,” while the will acts not in terms of similitude but inclination or movement toward an object. The movement of love in God is thus called “spirit, a name that expresses a certain vital motion and impulse, as anyone is said to be moved or impelled by love to perform an action.” For this reason, the Spirit follows the Word, both eternally and in time, in agreement with Jesus’ statement that he will send “the Spirit of truth” from the Father (Jn 15.26), and again: “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete.”

Thomas develops the foregoing teaching in question 34 on the person of the Son as Word, with constant reference to Augustine’s mature trinitarian theology.

The pedagogy of the argument begins again from the analogy between human and divine words, citing Augustine as a precedent: “Whoever can understand the word, not only before it is sounded, but also before thought has clothed it with imaginary sound, can already see some likeness of that Word of whom it is said: ‘In the beginning was the

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202 27, 3 ad 3.
203 27, 4 c.
204 27, 3 sc. Cf. similarly 36, 2 c: “love must proceed from a word. For we do not love anything unless we apprehend it by a mental conception. Hence also in this way it is manifest that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son.”
The human word may be understood properly in three ways, and in a fourth way figuratively. Common sense suggests that word denotes what is spoken out loud by the voice. A moment’s reflection on the “what” in question, however, yields the insight that the “exterior” word came “from an interior source,” both in terms of the vocal sound produced and the concept or thought signified. And these latter are related, as Aristotle observed, because the sound signifies the concept or thought expressed, so that the thought precedes the sound. All together, therefore, any given word gathers together (i) an “interior concept of the mind,” (ii) a sound, and (iii) the “imagination” or meaning of the sound. Or, as John Damascene wrote of these three modes of word (reversing the second and third senses to reflect their logical order), first is “the natural movement of the intellect, whereby it is moved, and understands, and thinks, as light and splendor,” third is that which “is not pronounced by a vocal word, but is uttered in the heart,” and second is the messenger of “intelligence” or understanding. Finally, word may be understood metaphorically by way of reference to something that was “signified or effected” by a word, as in the sentence “this is the word that I have said,” alluding to a previous assertion or command.

In the case of God, word properly signifies the “concept of the intellect,” a phrase that comprehends the first and the third senses of the human word, namely, an interior or 

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205 34, 1 c, quoting De trin. 15. For some general reflection on the significance of such analogies in Thomas’s teaching, see Arturo Blanco, “Word and Truth in Divine Revelation. A study of the Commentary of S. Thomas on John 14:6,” La doctrine de la révélation divine de saint Thomas d’Aquain, ed. Leo Elders (Studi tomistici 37; Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Pontificia Accademia di S. Tommaso e di Religione Cattolica, 1990).

immanent concept that the mind has developed or conceived, and so understood. For this reason, *word* in God refers to the second person of the Trinity and not the divine essence (nor any other person), because the very fact of the Word’s conception implies its having “proceeded from something other than itself, namely, from the knowledge of the one conceiving.”

This way of stating the point emphasizes the Word’s origination from a distinct source, while at the same time imagining how it may be possible for the Word to act in concert with the Father. Thus, Aquinas extends the point in a careful reflection on what it means to say that God “speaks.” “Properly speaking,” the person in God who speaks is the Father, as Augustine recognized at *De trinitate* 7: “He who speaks in that co-eternal Word is understood as not alone in God, but as being with that very Word, without which he would not be speaking.” And in fact every person of the Trinity shares in the Word, for each person “is spoken” as understanding follows the Word’s interior signification. That is, by the very speaking of the person of the Word—when he eternally proceeds—the Father understands “himself, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and all other things contained in this knowledge; so that the whole Trinity is spoken in the Word, and likewise all creatures.” In this way, while “only the person who utters the Word is the

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207 *Ibid.* Cf. 42, 6 ad 2, in explanation of the Father’s commanding the Son (as at Jn 14.31), teaching the Son (as at Jn 5.20), and even speaking to the Son (as at Jn 5.30: “As I hear, so I judge”): “The Father’s ‘showing’ and the Son’s ‘hearing’ are to be taken in the sense that the Father communicates knowledge to the Son, as he communicates his essence. The command of the Father can be explained in the same sense, as giving him from eternity knowledge and will to act, by begetting him. Or, better still, this may be referred to Christ in his human nature.”

speaker in God,” it is true that “each person understands and is understood, and consequently is spoken, in the Word.” 209

As the preceding argument indicates, if thought and language find their native territory in the procession of the Word from the Father, then all intelligent communication by creatures will follow from, and subsist in, this same theological context. There are effectively three claims here, that Aquinas develops for the remainder of question 34, and in subsequent questions on the Trinity.

1. Word must be a personal and a proper name of God; hence it cannot be dismissed as mere metaphor, as the Arians claimed by denying the Son’s substantial identity with the Father. And yet Word is sometimes said of God metaphorically or figuratively just as Scripture—and sacred doctrine after it—is sacramental, according to I 1, 9: God teaches spiritual truths by employing material things. In the case of metaphorical instances of word, the attribution necessarily draws the speaker into a web of language, thence a verbal “manifestation,” about God, observes Aquinas; and “exterior” sign-making follows from the “interior concept of the mind,” making it impossible to deny a more-than-metaphorical sense of word in God in at least some cases. 210 When Psalm 148 speaks of “fire, hail, snow, ice, and storms doing his word,”

209 34, 1 ad 3. 34, 1 sc quotes from elsewhere in *De trinitate* 7 to similar effect: “As the Son is related to the Father, so also is the Word to Him Whose Word He is.” Cf. 42, 5 c in proof of the point that the Father and the Son are “in” each other: “the procession of the intelligible word is not outside the intellect, inasmuch as it remains in the utterer of the word. What also is uttered by the word is therein contained.” For a parallel to 34, 1 ad 3, see *In Ioh* 1.7, n. 118: John calls “the Son of God the Word, by which the Father utters himself (dicit se) and every creature.”

210 34, 1 ad 1. Cf. 33, 2 ad 3 for an earlier, succinct iteration of the final answer: “the divine Word is something subsistent in the divine nature; and hence he is properly and not metaphorically called Son, and his principle is called Father.”
for instance, the sign or effect of the word in question is called *word* because “creatures are said to do the word of God by executing any effect to which they are ordained from the word conceived of the divine wisdom.”\(^{211}\) Likewise, Hebrews 1.3: “bearing all things by the word of his power,” employs *word* as a figure for power precisely because “by the effect of the power of the Word things are kept in being, as also by the effect of the power of the Word things are brought into being.”\(^{212}\) In every case, the sense of the scriptural *word* refers back to the effective person of the Word, as wisdom and as creator.

2. If Word is a personal name for God, then this fact must also be parsed in trinitarian terms. Above all, the identification of the Son as Word communicates the fact that God knows and understands himself; that, as Augustine says, the Word is “begotten wisdom” or “begotten knowledge,” as “the concept of the Wise One.” In this way, it may also make sense, with Anselm, to liken God’s speaking to “seeing by thought,” since “the Word is conceived by the consideration or gaze of divine thought.” Thought is not properly attributed to God, however, “lest we believe that in God there is something unstable, now assuming the form of Word, now putting off that form and remaining latent and as it were formless,” as Augustine wrote; for God does not “search after truth,” but “perfectly contemplate” it.\(^{213}\) Thus God the Word is identical with the divine intellect, distinguished from the Father only by relation.\(^{214}\) And if the Holy Spirit speaks a word in

\(^{211}\) 34, 1 obj 4 and ad 4.

\(^{212}\) 34, 2 ad 5.

\(^{213}\) 34, 1 ad 2, quoting *De trin.* 15. This text builds on I 14, 7 c, which argued that “in God’s knowledge there is no *discursus,*” that is, discursiveness or discursivity; rather than thinking things through, God knows everything immediately. Cf. similarly the case of angelic knowledge at 58, 3.

\(^{214}\) 34, 2 ad 4.
turn, as Basil creatively imagined (improprie et figurate), it will be this same Word of the Son, given wholly to making him known and manifesting him.\textsuperscript{215}

Thomas extends his reflections on these points in article 8 of question 39, on the appropriation of essential attributes to the persons. In terms of God’s being, Thomas appropriates beauty to the Son on three counts, following Augustine in each case. First, the integrity or perfection of the Son is seen as he truly and perfectly shares the nature of the Father. Second, his proportion or harmony follows from his being the image of the Father. Third, his brightness or clarity accords with the Son as Word, “which is the light and splendor of the intellect, as Damascene says.” And Augustine similarly writes of “the perfect Word, not wanting in anything, and so to speak the art of the omnipotent God.”\textsuperscript{216} In terms of God’s power, wisdom is appropriated to the Son as Word because “a word is nothing but the concept of wisdom.”\textsuperscript{217} Finally, in terms of God’s relation to his effects, the phrase \textit{by whom (per quem)} is applied properly to the Son as cause, according to John 1.3: ‘All things were made by him.’” This text does not mean that the Son or Word is an instrument of the Father, but rather a “principle from a principle,” as Augustine taught. At the same time, the preposition \textit{by} is appropriated to the Son to communicate the “habit

\textsuperscript{215} 34, 2 ad 5.

\textsuperscript{216} 39, 8 c, quoting \textit{De trin.} 6.10 three times. It follows that \textit{truth} also should be appropriated to the Son, since it belongs to the intellect. It is not, however, a property of his, since the intellect (or understanding) is “referred to the essence, and not the persons” (\textit{ibid.} at the very end, in response to obj 5). Cf. 16, 5 ad 2 for an earlier affirmation of the appropriation of truth to the Son.

\textsuperscript{217} \textit{Ibid.}
of a form” by which an agent works, as an artist by his art; and in this sense, again, the Son is called wisdom and art.\textsuperscript{218}

3. The very fact of God’s speaking by the Word “imports” or conveys “regard for creatures,” as the quotation of John 1.3 reveals: that all things were made by the Word (who was with God, and was God, in the beginning); and again, Hebrews 1.3: that the Son, “through whom [God] created the worlds” (1.2), “sustains all things by his powerful word.”\textsuperscript{219} This follows from the fact that God, “by knowing himself, knows every creature.” That is, by one act of understanding, the Word of God “expresses” both the Father and all creatures. Moreover, with respect to creatures, the Word of God is both cognitive and “constructive” (\textit{factiva}), so that they are at once expressed and “produced” (\textit{operativum}), according to Psalm 32.9: “He spoke, and they were made.”\textsuperscript{220}

As Thomas began his treatise \textit{De Deo trino} with a quotation of Jesus from John 8, reflecting the origin of the Word in the Father, so he begins the final question of the treatise: “I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me” (Jn 8.16).\textsuperscript{221} In both cases, the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[] \textsuperscript{218} \textit{Ibid.}: “Haec vero praepositio per designat quidem quandoque causam mediam; sicut dicimus quod faber operatur per martellum. Et sic ly per quandoque non est appropriatum, sed proprium filii, secundum illud Jn 1: \textit{omnia per ipsum facta sunt}; non quia filius sit instrumentum, sed quia ipse est \textit{principium de principio}. Quandoque vero designat habitudinem formae per quam agens operatur; sicut dicimus quod artifex operatur per artem. Unde, sicut sapientia et ars appropriantur filio, ita et ly per quem.” The phrase \textit{principium de principio} recurs throughout the corpus, and is drawn from two Augustinian sources cited at obj 4: \textit{De trin.} 6.10 and \textit{Contra Maxim.} 2.
\item[] \textsuperscript{219} 34, 3 c. See again 39, 8 c for the quotation of John, and 34, 2 ad 5 for the quotation of Hebrews. Thomas also quotes the latter text (along with Col 1.15) at 35, 2 c, with reference to the Word as image of God.
\item[] \textsuperscript{220} \textit{Ibid.}
\item[] \textsuperscript{221} 43, 1 sc. Cf. 27, 1 sc.
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Word speaks as incarnate. But only with question 43, on the mission of the divine persons, does Thomas finally focus on the Incarnation of the Word.\textsuperscript{222} In this way, the force of the trinitarian theology of preceding questions, summarized in the first and second points of our organization of the argument of question 34, is deployed to the end of developing the significance of the third point, the relation of the Word to creatures. And in this way, Thomas displays again his mindfulness of the need for beginning students to see, from time to time, the larger order—beginning, end, and “way”—of sacred doctrine.\textsuperscript{223}

Of course, before he became incarnate, the Word of God already “was in the world,” for “the world came into being through him,” according to John 1.10. The Father’s sending of the Son into the world thus pertains to his “beginning to exist visibly in the world by taking our nature.”\textsuperscript{224} This way of stating the point allows Aquinas, following the example of Scripture, to focus on the Incarnation without letting go of the concomitant action of the other persons of the Trinity to the end of human sanctification. Thus, “it is said of divine Wisdom: ‘Send her from heaven to your saints, and from the seat of your greatness’ (Wis 9.10).”\textsuperscript{225} And in light of Jesus’ own assurance at John 14.23: “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we

\textsuperscript{222} See the fleeting references to the Incarnation at 20, 4 ad 2, 29, 1 ad 2, and 32, 1 ad 3, for instance.

\textsuperscript{223} Recalling I 2 prologue, following the general prologue’s concern about the “order of the discipline” of theology.

\textsuperscript{224} 43, 1 c.

\textsuperscript{225} 43, 5 sc.
will come to them, and make our home with them,” Thomas concludes that “the whole Trinity dwells in the mind by sanctifying grace.”  

As the latter quotation suggests, the love of the faithful for God, and God’s love of the faithful, fall under the province of grace. And this leads Thomas to recall, as at I 1, 6 ad 3, that the “gifts of grace belong to the Holy Spirit, according to I Corinthians 12.11.”  

Gift is in fact a proper name for the Spirit who is Love, as Thomas argued at I 38, following Augustine—“although the Son, too, is given... from the Father’s love,” according to John 3.16. Some gifts, however, “by reason of their own particular nature, are appropriated in a certain way to the Son, namely, those which belong to the intellect, in light of which we speak of the mission of the Son,” observes Aquinas. As Augustine wrote: “The Son is sent to anyone invisibly when he is known and perceived.”  

In all events, the end of the trinitarian missions is human sanctification, a point that provides the occasion for Thomas’s most interesting comment on the relation, and the order, of the Word and Love. Is it not true that “the gifts belonging to the perfection of the intellect” can be held without charity, hence without the gift of sanctifying grace, according to I Corinthians 13.2: “If I have prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so that I could move mountains, but have not charity, I am nothing”? The question recalls the concession at I 1, 6 ad 3 of a twofold manner of

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226 43, 5 c.
227 43, 5 obj 1. I 1, 6 ad 3 cited I Corinthians 2.15 for the point.
228 38, 2 ad 1.
229 43, 5 ad 1, quoting De trin. 4.
230 43, 5 obj 2.
wisdom, by inclination and by knowledge, the second permitting a devoted student of
morality “to judge rightly about virtuous acts” without herself having virtue. As Thomas
apparently meant to commend the way of “the spiritual person” (I Cor 2.15) in that earlier
text, the Hierothean way of both studying and suffering divine things, all the more in this
case does he steadfastly focus on how a “soul” may be “conformed to God by grace.”
“An assimilation of the soul to the divine person who is sent” must take place “by some
gift of grace.” Hence, by the gift of charity, the soul is assimilated to the Holy Spirit. This
cannot occur, however, apart from the Son as Word, who is “not any sort of word, but
one who breathes forth Love.”231 Again, “love must proceed from a word,” as the act of
the will is guided by the intellect; “we do not love anything unless we apprehend it by a
mental conception.”232 Accordingly, “the Word we speak of is knowledge with love,”
wrote Augustine, and Thomas elaborates:

the Son is sent not in accordance with every and any kind of intellectual
perfection, but according to the intellectual instruction which breaks forth into the
affection of love, as is said in John 6.45: “Everyone who has heard and learned
(didicit) from the Father comes to me,” and Psalm 38.4: “In my meditation a fire
shall flame forth.” Thus Augustine plainly says that “the Son is sent whenever he
is known and perceived by anyone.”233

But “perception implies a certain experimental knowledge,” continues Thomas, in a final
stage of his argument; “and this is properly called wisdom—as it were, a sweet

231 43, 5 ad 2.
232 36, 2 c.
233 I 43, 5 ad 2, quoting De trin. 9.10 and 4.20.
knowledge—according to Sirach 6.23: ‘The wisdom of doctrine is according to her name.’

In this text, Aquinas effectively stands back from the labor of the preceding forty-one questions, a carefully primed canvas, with the barest hint of a portrait beginning to take shape, to gesture at the Dionysian and Corinthian frame of the whole. As always, the frame functions as a guide or rule for the completed work, conveying and constraining its order—in this case, a trinitarian and christological order, revealed and incarnated as a wisdom that may be experienced, and even tasted, with delight; a sapida sapientia, in Thomas’s whimsical wordplay.

If, to shift metaphors, 43, 5 ad 2 appears as something of a summit from the vantage of I 1, 6 ad 3, then the first article of question 32 must be counted as another peak in this range, being Thomas’s most thoroughgoing review of the methodology of sacred doctrine since question 1. Of course, the Trinity cannot be known by natural reason, the saint reiterates, partly on the grounds of I Corinthians 2.6-7, a text that, as seen in the previous chapter, Thomas reads alongside explicitly sacramental parts of Paul’s letter, following the reference to God’s wisdom as a hidden mystery. For faith cannot be proven “except by authority alone, to those who receive the authority,” continues Thomas, in support of which he quotes from Divine Names 2, seven paragraphs

234 Ibid.

235 Ibid. For an anticipation of 43, 5 ad 2, see 39, 8 c, which deployed Augustine (at De trin. 10.11) to argue that use, understood as enjoyment, is appropriated to the Holy Spirit, since the Spirit is the love “whereby the Father and the Son enjoy each other.” On this account, the Spirit may also be called “the sweetness of the Begetter and the Begotten” (De trin. 6.10), and again, the means of their “concord or union.”

236 See esp. the final para. of sec. IV with reference to I Corinthians 4.1 and 14.2, and note 140.
before the text enshrined at I 1, 6 ad 3 commending the study and suffering of divine things. “Whoever wholly resists the word is far off from our philosophy,” writes Dionysius, “whereas if he regards the truth of the word—that is, the sacred word—we too follow this rule.” All together, and following on question 1, these texts anticipate the proliferation of quotations from I Corinthians in question 43, drawn not from the first three chapters as before but from chapters 10-13, which Thomas in his commentary notes are especially given to the sacrament of the Eucharist.

On the latter count, two of the remaining articles of question 43 are worthy of mention, as elaborations upon the reordered way to human sanctification in God via the sweet Word of wisdom. In terms of “progress in virtue or increase of grace,” Thomas repeats and extends the second quotation of Augustine from 43, 5 ad 2: that the Son is sent as he is known and perceived “so far as he can be known and perceived according to the capacity of the soul, whether journeying towards God, or united perfectly to him.” A certain creaturely “proficiency” is thus required—for instance, with respect to “the gift of

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237 32, 1 c: “Qui autem probare nititur Trinitatem personarum naturali ratione, fidei dupliciter derogat. Primo quidem, quantum ad dignitatem ipsius fidei, quae est ut sit de rebus invisibilibus, quae rationem humanam excedunt. Unde apostolus dicit, ... I Cor 2: sapientiam loquimur inter perfectos, sapientiam vero non huius saeculi, neque principum huius saeculi; sed loquimur Dei sapientiam in mysterio, quae abscondita est.... Quae igitur fidei sunt, non sunt tentanda probare nisi per auctoritates, his qui auctoritates suscipiunt. Apud alios vero, sufficit defendere non esse impossibile quod praedicat fides. Unde Dionysius dicit, 2 cap. de Div. Nom.: si aliquis est qui totaliter eloquiis resistit, longe erit a nostra philosophia; si autem ad veritatem eloquiorum, scilicet sacrorum, respicit, hoc et nos canone utimur.” Cf. the translation of the (entire) text in The Complete Works (New York: Paulist, 1987): If anyone “is entirely at loggerheads with Scripture, he will be far removed also from what is my philosophy, and if he thinks nothing of the divine wisdom of the Scriptures, how can I introduce him to a real understanding of the Word of God? If, on the other hand, he heeds the truth of Scripture then here is the standard, here is the light by which, so far as I can, I speak in my own defense and by virtue of which I assert that the Word of God operates sometimes without, sometimes with distinctions” (p. 60).

238 Quoted in question 43 are, in order of appearance: I Cor 12.7 (a. 3, ad 4); I Cor 12.11 (a. 5, obj 1); I Cor 13.2 (a. 5, obj 2); I Cor 10.4 (a. 7, ad 2); I Cor 12.7 (a. 7, ad 6). Only John is quoted more in question 43, with seven quotations.
miracles or of prophecy, or in the fervor of charity leading a person to expose himself to the danger of martyrdom, or to renounce his possessions, or to undertake any arduous work.”\footnote{43, 6 ad 2, at De trin. 4.20.} And the sacraments must be factored here as well, Aquinas adds; for “the mission of the divine persons is... to those who receive grace through the sacraments.”\footnote{43, 6 ad 4.} In terms of the visible mission of the Holy Spirit, Aquinas emphasizes the extent to which the Son is the “principle” of the Spirit, hence the “author” of sanctification, of which the Spirit is the “mark.”\footnote{43, 7 c.} The Son’s mission is of course made “according to the rational nature to which it belongs to act, and which is capable of sanctification.”\footnote{43, 7 ad 4.} The various “manifestations” of the Spirit enumerated by Paul (I Cor 12.7) may thus be understood as layers of discourse—“confirmation and propagation of the faith”—that follow on and interpret the words of the Son, according to Hebrews 2.3: the word “was declared at first through the Lord, and was attested to us by those who heard him.”\footnote{43, 7 ad 6.} That is, Thomas explains in a remarkable passage,

in a special sense, a mission of the Holy Spirit was directed to Christ, to the apostles, and to some of the early saints on whom the Church was in a way founded; in such a manner, however, that the visible mission made to Christ should show forth the invisible mission made to him, not at that particular time, but at the first moment of his conception. The visible mission was directed to Christ at the time of his Baptism by the figure of a dove, a fruitful animal, to show forth in Christ the authority of the giver of grace by spiritual regeneration. Hence the Father’s voice spoke: “This is my beloved Son” (Mt 3.17), that others might be regenerated to the likeness of the only begotten. The Transfiguration showed it
forth in the appearance of a bright cloud, to show the exuberance of doctrine. Hence it was said: “Listen to him” (Mt 17.5). To the apostles the mission was directed in the form of breathing to show forth the power of their ministry in the dispensation of the sacraments. Hence it was said: “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them” (Jn 20.23). And again, under the sign of fiery tongues, to show forth the office of teaching (doctrinae); hence it is said that “they began to speak in various languages” (Acts 2.4).244

In this way, the order of wisdom subsists in the personal and incarnated Word of the Son, spoken by the Father, that is at the same time taught, learned, and experienced by the faithful as an enkindling fire. “The Word and the Spirit of Love are sent to us,” writes Thomas Gilby, “and all the words of the science of faith and all affections within divine friendship are so many echoes and refractions of their presence.”245

II. In the image of the Word (QQ. 44-46 and 93)

Because, again, the whole of the prima pars is given to the triune God, and because all things are related to God as the subject of sacred doctrine in any case,246 Thomas’s discussion of creation from question 44, thence of the human person, is wholly theological.247 Moreover, as a good teacher, Thomas repeats the principal lines of

244 Ibid.


246 I 2 prologue and I 1, 7 c.

argument from preceding questions, in order to show his students how an adequate account of creation must begin with God. In this way, the handling of God as Word carries over into these questions, to the end of a continued wrestling with the relation of the Word of wisdom to the several layers of theological discourse, in Scripture and by the faithful, that follow after him.

In questions 44-46 on the production of creatures, Thomas reviews the fact that the whole Godhead causes all things, as Dionysius taught at *Divine Names* 2,248 but in a way that appropriates certain actions to the orderly processes of intellect and will, like a human craftsman. As the craftsman conceives a word in his mind, and then focuses his will on a given object, so does God the Father through his Word and Love, reflecting the order of the procession of Son and Spirit.249 In the memorable rendering of an earlier question: “Moses, when he had said, ‘In the beginning God created heaven and earth’ (Gen 1.1), added, ‘God said, “Let there be light”’ (Gen 1.3), to manifest the divine Word; and then said, ‘God saw the light, that it was good’ (Gen 1.4), to show the proof of the divine love.”250 In this first text of the Bible, we see the Father as the efficient principle and the Son as the exemplar principle “by reason of wisdom,” according to Psalm 103.24: “You have made all things in wisdom,” and Colossians 1.16: “in him all things were created.”251 On this account, only the Father may be called the Creator, but “through” the Son all things were made (Jn 1.3), in concert with the governing and quickening of the

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248 45, 6 sc.
249 45, 6 c.
250 32, 1 ad 3.
251 46, 3 c.
Spirit. Or, as articulated at 39, 8, power is appropriated to the Father, wisdom to the Son as Word, and goodness to the Spirit.\textsuperscript{252}

At 45, 7, Thomas moves from the fact of the triune God’s act of creating to the question of how creatures are related to God. All creatures bear at least a “trace” of the Trinity, explains Thomas, following Augustine, as all things may be considered as God’s effects. “For every creature subsists in its own being, and has a form, whereby it is determined to a species, and has relation to something else.” In this way, the substance of all things represents the Father as “cause and principle,” the “form and species” represent the Word, and the relation of order represents the Spirit. Rational creatures, however, also bear the “image” of the Trinity, “as fire generated represents fire generating,” for the familiar reason that these creatures conceive words by their intellect and love by their will, after the pattern of the Son and Spirit.\textsuperscript{253}

Thomas returns to this discussion and deepens it considerably in question 93 on the image of God, the effect of which is a knitting together of the initial reflections on the “inner word” at question 34 with their practical outworking in the souls of the faithful at 43, 5 and 7.\textsuperscript{254} The question begins with a recognition of the apparent distinction between image and likeness, according to Genesis 1.26: “Let us make humankind to our image

\textsuperscript{252} 45, 6 ad 2.

\textsuperscript{253} 45, 7 c. Thomas reviews this teaching at 93, 6.

\textsuperscript{254} For commentary on this question, see the first part of Jean-Pierre Torrell, “‘Imiter Dieu comme des enfants bien-aimés’: La conformité à Dieu et au Christ dans l’œuvre de saint Thomas,” \textit{Recherches Thomasiennes: Études revues et augmentées} (Paris: Vrin, 2000), and Merriell, “Trinitarian Anthropology,” \textit{passim}.
and likeness.” As Augustine observed, these two differ in that the notion of an image presumes likeness, but not vice versa; an image “is copied from something else” and so imitates it. This need not mean that all images are “equal,” for some are perfect likenesses of that which they reflect, and others are imperfect. The first-begotten of God, for instance, is the perfect image of God, as Colossians 1.15 implies, while the image exists in human beings “as in an alien nature, as the image of the king is in a silver coin,” in the bishop of Hippo’s analogy.

The latter point recalls the fact of human sin, in response to which God intervenes to the end of drawing human beings to himself; and this suggests another sense of likeness, as the goal of human striving after God by grace by knowing and loving him, and so imitating God’s own “intellectual nature.” With this point in view, the image of God in human beings may be described in three stages: in terms of (i) a natural aptitude for understanding and loving God, (ii) an actual or habitual knowledge and love of him “in the conformity of grace,” and (iii) a perfect knowledge and love of him “in the likeness of glory.” On Psalm 4.7: “The light of your countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us,” the gloss distinguishes “a threefold image” of creation, re-creation, and likeness. “The first is found in all human beings,” writes Thomas, “the second only in the just, the third only in the blessed.”

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255 93, 1 sc.
256 93, 1 c, quoting Question 74 of 83 QQ.
257 93, 1 ad 2, citing De decem chordis. Cf. 88, 3 ad 3 for an earlier statement of the point.
258 93, 4 c. Cf. 93, 3 c: “potest considerari imago Dei in homine, quantum ad id in quo secundario consideratur, prout scilicet in homine invenitur quaedam Dei imitatio, inquantum scilicet homo est de
Thomas returns to this other sense of likeness in the last article of question 93, in light of which several preceding articles may be read with the same end in view. Articles 6 and 7 review the trinitarian basis for human understanding: that “the image of the Trinity may be found in the acts of the soul inasmuch as from the knowledge we possess by actual thought we form an internal word, and thence break into love (in amorem prorumpimus).”259 As D. Juvenal Merriell has noted, the only other place in Thomas’s writings where he uses the phrase “in amorem prorumpimus” is I 43, 5 ad 2, a text devoted to reflecting on the conditions for perfect knowledge and love of God unto glory.260 Likewise, article 8 begins from the Augustinian premise that the human mind bears the image of God precisely in order to “remember, understand, and love” him.261 For this reason, “we refer the divine image in human beings to the verbal concept born of the knowledge of God, and to the love derived from it.” That is, “the image of God is found in the soul insofar as it turns to God, or possesses a nature that enables it to turn to God.”262 Such a knowledge and love of God is meritorious, but is only in us by grace,263 and is enjoyed by the saints in glory, who are perfectly conformed to God’s image in the homine, sicut Deus de Deo.” For an analogous account of three kinds of knowledge in the case of demons, see 64, 1 c.

259 93, 7 c.
261 93, 8 sc, quoting De trin. 14.
262 93, 8 c.
263 93, 8 ad 3.
beatific vision, according to II Corinthians 3.18: “we are transformed into the same image from glory to glory.”

In this light, returning to where the question began, likeness may in one sense be considered as a preamble to image, signifying something more general, and in another sense as subsequent to image, signifying its perfection. Augustine used the terms in the first way, and Damascene in the second, so that, Thomas concludes, it is not “unfitting to use the term image from one point of view and from another the term likeness.” In either case, what is at stake concerns the possibility that some creatures may be called “sons of God,” as they are in a certain way assimilated to the likeness of “he who is the true Son,” by the Father’s declaration (Jn 1.18); called, therefore, “according to his purpose,” and “predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born of many brethren” (Rom 8.29). The Son “proceeds from the Father before the creature, to which the name of filiation is applied as it participates in the likeness of the Son,” just as “the word conceived in the mind of the artist is first understood to proceed from the artist before the thing designed, which is produced in likeness to the word conceived in the artist’s mind.” In this perspective, if “love of the word... belongs to the nature of image” and “love of virtue belongs to likeness,” as Thomas has it

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264 93, 8 obj 4.
265 93, 9 c.
266 93, 9 ad 3.
267 41, 3 c.
268 33, 3 ad 1.
in the final response of question 93, then disciples of the triune God will seek and strive after both: because the word of the Son is Love, calling forth “a certain experimental knowledge” that is sweet.270

269 93, 9 ad 4.
270 I 43, 5 ad 2.
CHAPTER 4:

“MOSES... WROTE ABOUT ME” (JN 5.46): THE PRESCRIPTIVE GRAMMAR OF INCARNATION IN ST I-II AND II-II

Having treated of God as exemplar in the prima pars, incorporating all that “came forth from the power of God in accordance with his will,” Aquinas turns his focus to human beings as made in God’s image, a fact that implies endowment with an analogous “free-will and self-movement,” as Damascene states. Accordingly, the secunda pars will focus on “human acts, in order to know by what acts we may obtain happiness,” that is, the vision of God himself. In this way, in Mark Jordan’s appropriation of Boyle’s characterization of the “setting” of the Summa, Thomas aims to expand “the pastoral and practical curriculum of Dominican houses”—and perhaps “other Christian schools” as well—“by placing it within the frame of the whole of theology,” including therefore the christological completion of the tertia pars. In other words, students

271 I-II prologue.
272 I-II 6 prologue, in light of 5, 3 c.
are invited to study morals through a clarifying reminder of arguments about God as creator and governor; they are habituated into moral knowledge not only through practice with its disputative elements, but through dialectical narration of patterns for lived virtues and ways of life; and they are shown, in the great disclosure at the turn from the second part to the third, that the power moving their inquiry back to God has been the power of their incarnate Lord.  

The first part of Thomas’s discussion, the *prima secunda*, is devoted to “general principles,” while the second part, the *secunda secundae*, turns to “matters of detail.” Both of these are founded, as already noted, in “the goal towards which human life tends,” namely, the happiness of “knowing and loving God” in the perfection of contemplation; an end that by definition cannot be obtained in this life, as Thomas argued at I 12, 11. That “perfect and true” happiness cannot be had in this life does not mean that the actions of this life bear no relation to the next, though happiness cannot be attained by “natural powers.” “No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him” wrote Paul (I Cor 2.9), in a text placed by Thomas at the beginning of ST I 1 and repeated here at the outset of I-II. On this account, as the student of the *prima pars* knows well, God approaches human beings as a teacher, according to the psalm: “Blessed is the one whom you instruct, O

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274 Jordan, “*Summa of Theology* as Moral Formation,” p. 120.

275 I-II 6 prologue. Cf. the helpful comments of Jordan, “*Summa of Theology* as Moral Formation,” p. 125.


277 I-II 1, 8 c; cf. I-II 2, 8; 3, 5-8; etc.

278 I-II 5, 3.


280 I-II 5, 5 sc. Cf. discussion of this text of I Corinthians in ch. 2 of the present study.
Lord” (93.12), and the words of Jesus, quoted twice by Thomas: “This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God” (Jn 17.3). To love God is to know him, for “nothing is loved except what is known,” as Augustine taught, and in this sense, both are requisite for the attainment of human happiness, even though love is “more excellent” (see I Cor 13). Thus, Paul taught the Corinthians to “run in such a way that you may win” the spiritual race (I Cor 9.24), that is, that you may see, comprehend, and delight in God as end, and “desire nothing amiss,” in Augustine’s phrase. The whole of the secunda pars is placed in the service of this objective.

I. The theological form of virtue and gift (ST I-II)

Thomas surveys human acts in general in questions 6-48 before turning for the remainder of I-II to the “principles” of these acts, divided into two categories, intrinsic and extrinsic. For present purposes, the latter discussion of principles is more important, not least as the frame for II-II. In terms of intrinsic principles, Thomas focuses on habits, including virtues and vices. In terms of extrinsic principles, he focuses on law and grace,

281 I-II 5, 1 sc; 3, 2 ad 1 and 3, 4 sc.
282 I-II 3, 4 obj 4 and ad 4, quoting De trin. 10.1: “non enim diligitur nisi cognitum.” Thomas cites this text of Augustine again at I-II 27, 2 sc, and I Corinthians 13 again at I-II 4, 2 obj 3. Cf. on the order of knowledge and love I 27, 3, discussed in the previous chapter.
283 I-II 4, 3 sc and c.
284 I-II 5, 8 ad 3, quoting De trin. 13.5.
as the means by which God moves human beings to good, by instruction and assistance.  

Habits

Before coming to human virtue as a habit, Thomas reflects for six questions on habits in general. These questions follow Aristotle closely, beginning with the definition of habit as “a disposition whereby something is disposed for good or ill, either in regard to itself or another.” A habit is thus a quality, such as health, in the Philosopher’s example; and Thomas mentions as other examples incurable disease, beauty, science, understanding, wisdom, justice, and faith. Typically, habits function as “powers of the soul,” as the soul is disposed to “operate” in any number of ways, non-determinatively. In this case, habits are non-essential, since the soul is “distinct from that to which it is disposed..., as potentiality is to act.” In the case of human participation in a higher nature, according to II Peter 1, the habit of grace inheres in the soul essentially, a matter that Thomas will treat at the end of the prima secunda. At the same time, God infuses habits that “exceed the proportion of human nature,” habits that, as “gratuitous virtues,”

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285 I-II 49 prologue and 90 prologue.
286 I-II 49, 1 c.
287 Ibid.
288 I-II 50 1 sc; 49, 4 c; 50, 4 c (and similarly 52, 4 sc); 50, 5 sc; 52, 1 sc.
289 I-II 50, 2 c; cf. 49, 4 c.
290 I-II 49, 4 c.
291 I-II 50, 2 c.
dispose human beings to the end of happiness. And even habits that can be caused
naturally God sometimes infuses “for the manifestation of his power,” and because they
are in this way perfected. Thus God “gave to the apostles the science of the Scriptures
and of all tongues, which human beings can acquire by study or by custom, but not so
perfectly,”292 a statement that recalls Thomas’s interest at I 1, 6 ad 3 in wisdom as a gift
of the Holy Spirit that is on that account a virtuous habit, beyond the wisdom that may be
“acquired by study,” though one lacks virtue oneself.293 In this way, Thomas initiates the
pattern of the discussion to follow, as a philosophical analysis of moral, intellectual, and
theological virtue that finds its completion in a trinitarian theology of exemplarity and
gift, thence in the provisions of law and grace.

Aquinas accepts Augustine’s definition of virtue as “a good quality of the mind
by which we live righteously, of which no one can make bad use, which God works in us
without us.”294 This definition “comprises perfectly the whole essential notion of virtue,”
suggests Thomas, as it may be understood in terms of the four causes: that the “genus and
difference” of virtue are its **good quality**, or, more precisely, its habit (formal cause); that

292 I-II 52, 4 c.

293 I 1, 6 ad 3: “Since judgment appertains to wisdom, the twofold manner of judging produces a
twofold wisdom. A person may judge in one way by inclination, as whoever has the habit of a virtue judges
rightly of what concerns that virtue by his very inclination towards it. Hence it is the virtuous person, as we
read, who is the measure and rule of human acts. In another way, by knowledge, just as one learned in
moral science might be able to judge rightly about virtuous acts, though she had not the virtue. The first
manner of judging divine things belongs to that wisdom which is set down among the gifts of the Holy
Spirit: ‘The spiritual person judges all things’ (1 Cor 2.15). And Dionysius says (Div. Nom. 2): ‘Hierotheus
is taught not by mere learning, but by experience of divine things.’ The second manner of judging belongs
to this doctrine which is acquired by study, though its principles are obtained by revelation.”

294 I-II 55, 4 sc and obj 1. The definition is “gathered principally from *De libero arbitrio* 2.19,” as
Thomas says, and is drawn more proximately from Lombard’s *Sentences*. See Wawrykow, *Westminster
it pertains to the mind (material cause); that its operative end is righteous living (final cause); and that God infuses virtue or works in us without us (efficient cause). It must be noted, however, that the last cause only pertains to infused virtue; hence, if the phrase “which God works in us without us” is omitted, “the remainder of the definition will apply to all virtues in general, whether acquired or infused.”

The latter distinction proves to be decisive for the arc of Thomas’s constructive argument in these questions, as he is interested in the hierarchy of virtues, both natural and supernatural. At the level of nature, Aquinas observes that the term is in a sense a misnomer, since all persons are not virtuous. Virtue is, however, natural to human beings “inchoatively.” Instilled in human reason, for instance, are “certain naturally known principles of both knowledge and action, which are the nurseries of intellectual and moral virtues, insofar as there is in the will a natural appetite for good in accordance with reason.” On this basis, Thomas spends considerable time reflecting on the relation between the moral or cardinal or principal virtues—temperance, justice, prudence, fortitude—and the intellectual virtues—science, understanding, wisdom, and art—at an almost pre-theological level. They are all together mutually constituting; moral virtue, for instance, requires understanding and prudence, just as prudence, as “the right reason

295 I-II 55, 4 c.

296 All from I-II 63, 1 c.

297 See I-II 56-61, and off and on thereafter. For lists of virtues, see 56, 3 c (cf. 57, 2-3) and 61, 4. The discussion is “almost” and not strictly pre-theological because of the proximate theological frame of questions 49-55, as well as the larger form of the work as a whole, focused on God as subject (I 1, 7).
about things to be done, ... requires moral virtue.” In terms of comparison, the intellectual virtues are more excellent simply speaking, since “the object of the reason is more excellent than the object of the appetite.” The intellectual virtues moreover “control” the moral virtues insofar as the former “perfect reason,” which is “the moving principle” of the latter. The moral virtues are more excellent, however, as they “perfect the appetite, whose function it is to move the other powers to act;” indeed, “virtue is so called from its being a principle of action, as the perfection of a power.”

At a second, supernatural level, Thomas’s discussion is transformed by the theological virtues. As we already know from the opening gambit of the *prima secunda*, the happiness “proportionate to human nature” which may be obtained by “natural principles” should be distinguished from the perfect happiness that can only be obtained “by the power of God, by a kind of participation of the Godhead,” again according to II Peter 1.4: that by Christ we are made “partakers of the divine nature.” On this account, in a restatement of the teaching of the first article of the *Summa*,

it is necessary for human beings to receive from God some additional principles, whereby they may be directed to supernatural happiness, even as they are directed to a connatural end by means of natural principles, albeit not without divine assistance. Such principles are called *theological*.

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298 I-II 58, 4-5; cf. 56, 3 c; 57, 4 c; 57, 5; 58, 4-5. Jean Porter observes that prudence is “strictly speaking an intellectual virtue,” as it “enables the agent to choose in accordance with a correct understanding of the human good;” it is therefore a “practical wisdom” (“Right Reason and the Love of God: The Parameters of Aquinas’ Moral Theology,” *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Rik Van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow [Notre Dame: UNDP, 2005], p. 176).

299 I-II 66, 3 c.

300 I-II 68, 8 c.

301 I-II 66, 3 c.

302 I-II 62, 1 c. Cf. 50, 2 c for the prior citation of II Peter 1.4.
virtues: first, because their object is God, inasmuch as they direct us aright to God; second, because they are infused in us by God alone; third, because they are handed on only by divine revelation in sacred Scripture.\footnote{Ibid.}

The prospect of superadded assistance from God displaces a sustainedly “natural” account of virtue by relativizing what may be accomplished apart from God and emphasizing the primacy of the reconfigured, theological pattern. Even Aristotle taught the importance of “striving toward divine things,” a common admonition of Scripture, as in the words of Jesus: “be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5.48). And Plotinus taught that God’s perfection serves as the exemplar of human virtue, since “in him pre-exist the types of all things.”\footnote{I-II 61, 5 c. Jean-Pierre Torrell suggests that this article “gives the trinitarian foundation of christic exemplarity” in “Le Christ dans la ‘spiritualité’ de saint Thomas,” Christ among the Medieval Dominicans: Representations of Christ in the Texts and Images of the Order of Preachers, ed. Kent Emery, Jr. and Joseph Wawrykow (Notre Dame: UNDP, 1998), p. 215 note 23.} Thomas cannot agree, however, with Aristotle’s statement that “virtue is the disposition of a perfect thing to that which is best; and by perfect I mean that which is disposed according to nature.”\footnote{I-II 62, 1 obj 1.} For the theological virtues surpass the essence of human nature—though they do, again, make human beings partakers in the \textit{divine} nature.\footnote{I-II 62, 1 ad 1.} While Aristotelian “wisdom” subsists in a merely human research into divinity, theological virtue approaches these same things “as they surpass human reason.”\footnote{I-II 62, 2 ad 2. Cf. 57, 2; 66, 5; 68, 1 ad 4.} This was the point of Paul’s argument in I Corinthians that we cannot know on our own “what God has prepared for those who love him” apart from the

\footnotetext[303]{Ibid.}
\footnotetext[305]{I-II 62, 1 obj 1.}
\footnotetext[306]{I-II 62, 1 ad 1.}
\footnotetext[307]{I-II 62, 2 ad 2. Cf. 57, 2; 66, 5; 68, 1 ad 4.}
revelation of his wisdom through the Spirit (I Cor 2.9 and following), a wisdom that takes surprising form in the “weakness” of crucifixion (I Cor 1.25).  

Accordingly, after the infusion of the theological virtues, God imparts “other habits”—the infused moral virtues and the gifts—that correspond “proportionately” to the theological virtues; and all the virtues and gifts should moreover be arranged relative to charity, since each “depends on charity in some way” as its “mother and root,” on the familiar grounds of I Corinthians 13 as well as several texts from I John. In terms of the moral virtues, God infuses them together with charity as their “principle,” explains Thomas, since the “effect” of charity is a good disposition toward one’s “ultimate end,” a matter of such importance that “only the infused virtues are perfect and deserve to be called virtues simply.” Similarly, reading backwards, the intellectual virtues confer an “aptness for a good work, namely, the consideration of truth,” but not “the right use of a power or habit” until the will is perfected by charity or justice. “In this way, there can be merit in the acts of these habits if they are done out of charity.” Finally, faith is an assent of one’s own free-will; but “to will as one ought is the outcome

308 I-II 62, 3 c and ad 2, quoting (again) I Corinthians 2.9 and 1.25, respectively.
309 I-II 63, 3 c; cf. 63, 4.
310 I-II 62, 2 ad 3 and 4 c.
311 See I-II 62, 3-4; 66, 6 sc; 67, 6 obj 1 and sc. For earlier citations of I Corinthians 13, see note 282, above.
312 I John 3.14: “He that loves not abides in death” (I-II 65, 2 sc) and I John 4.16: “He that abides in charity abides in God, and God in him” (I-II 65, 5 c and 66, 6 c; cf. 70, 3 c).
313 I-II 65, 3 c.
314 I-II 65, 2 c.
315 I-II 57, 1 c.
of charity which perfects the will, since every right movement of the will proceeds from a
right love, as Augustine says.”316 And hope, which “looks to God for future bliss,” is
perfect only if it is “based on the merits which we have” in accord with charity.317

In terms of the gifts, there is a sense in which they do not differ from the infused
moral virtues.318 All the virtues are not counted as gifts, however, and vice versa, which
leads Thomas to observe that in Scripture they are tied to divine inspiration, as in Isaiah
11.2: “the spirit of wisdom and understanding shall rest on him.”319 The gifts thus denote
God’s own action or “motion” that “makes human beings follow” his promptings.320
They are “divine virtues, perfecting human beings as moved by God.”321 In this light, the
gifts may be understood as more excellent than the intellectual and moral virtues because
the gifts “perfect the soul’s powers in relation to the Holy Spirit as mover, whereas the
virtues perfect either the reason itself or the other powers in relation to reason.” The
theological virtues, however, are more excellent than the gifts because the theological
virtues unite the human mind to God and so “regulate” the gifts.322 The love (amor) of
charity, for instance, “is of that which is already possessed, since the beloved is, in a

316 I-II 65, 4 c, citing De civ. Dei 14.9.
317 Ibid.
318 I-II 68, 1 c: “there is no reason why that which proceeds from one as a gift should not perfect
another in well-doing—especially as we have already stated that some virtues are infused into us by God.
Hence, in this respect, we cannot differentiate gifts from virtues.” See further 68, 1 ad 1; cf. 63, 3 c as a
precedent.
319 I-II 68, 1 c. Cf. II-II 8, 1 sc and 45, 1 sc for this same text from Isaiah.
320 I-II 68, 1 ad 3.
321 I-II 68, 1 ad 1.
322 I-II 68, 8 c.
manner, in the lover, and again, the lover is drawn by desire to union with the beloved. Hence it is written: ‘He that abides in charity abides in God, and God in him’ (I Jn 4.16).”\textsuperscript{323} For this reason, charity “never falls away,” as Paul says (I Cor 13.8), since love is perfect, and can remain identically the same in glory.\textsuperscript{324}

\textit{Law and grace}

Thomas comes at question 90 and following to law and grace as “extrinsic principles” of human acts, so called because God himself is “the extrinsic principle moving us to good” (\textit{principium exterius movens ad bonum}) by the instruction of the law and the assistance of grace.\textsuperscript{325} Of course, God is also the good “end” with which sacred doctrine is concerned, and the incarnate Christ is the “way” to that end.\textsuperscript{326} On this account, Thomas’s presentation of law and grace features Jesus Christ as Word of Wisdom, a literary decision that also completes the preceding discussion of infused virtue and gift by emphasizing the theological form of salvation.

To speak of law in the context of Scripture is to speak of revealed wisdom to the end of formation of the faithful by God. “Place before me as a law the way of your justification, O LORD,” prayed David in the psalm (119.33); for “the testimony of the

\textsuperscript{323} I-II 66, 6 c.
\textsuperscript{324} I-II 67, 6. Cf. 62, 2 ad 3.
\textsuperscript{325} I-II 90 prologue.
\textsuperscript{326} I 2 prologue, as the iconic summary of the work as a whole.
LORD is faithful, giving wisdom to little ones” (19.7). To be sure, with the priesthood of Christ comes a concomitant “change in the law,” according to the Apostle (Heb 7.12), and on this account “the divine law is twofold,” the new distinguished from and “surpassing” the old. The old law contained “certain rudiments of righteousness unto salvation” as a preparation to receive Christ and the new law, and so “was our pedagogue until Christ came,” in whom we are in turn “children of God through faith” (Gal 3.24, 26). In this way, the New Law “ordains” human beings to “an intelligible and heavenly good”—“divine things” themselves—as in Jesus’ invitation to “do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt 4.17), and again: “Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 5.20).

In the first article of question 91, Thomas founds his discussion of the various kinds of law in the “eternal law,” which is the “divine reason” that governs the universe. This is the “eternal concept” of God that “calls into existence the things that do not exist” (Rom 4.17), a law “promulgated” by the divine Word and recorded in “the writing of the Book of Life.” Thomas returns to the matter in question 93, and begins

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327 I-II 91, 4 sc: “legem ponam mihi, domine, in via iustificationum tuarum” and c: “testimonium domini fidele... sapientiam praestans parvulis.”

328 I-II 91, 5 sc and c.

329 I-II 91, 5 ad 2.

330 I-II 91, 5 c and ad 1. Cf. 106, 3 c and 107, 1 c (among other places) for this same text from Galatians.

331 I-II 91, 1 c.

332 I-II 91, 1 ad 1 and 2.
by reviewing the point that God creates all things by his exemplar wisdom, as art and
government require a pre-existent “type” of that which will be made and ordered. Just as
“the type of the divine Wisdom” by which all things were made “has the character of art,
exemplar, or idea,” therefore, this same type of Wisdom, which “moves all things to their
due end, bears the character of law.”333 Or, in other words, as at I 34, “all things that are
in the Father’s knowledge, whether they refer to the essence or the persons or the works
of God, are expressed by the Word, as Augustine declares,” including the eternal law.334
For this reason, all law takes on a christological cast, for “all laws proceed from the
eternal law,” according to Wisdom’s statement at Proverbs 8.15: “By me kings reign and
lawgivers decree just things.”335

The point is particularly interesting in the case of the old law. The old law was
surely “good” (Rom 7.12), for it accorded with reason, and forbade all kinds of sin.336
Various degrees of the good may be distinguished, however, as Dionysius noted—perfect
goodness, which “conduces to the end,” and imperfect goodness, which “is of some
assistance in attaining the end, but not sufficient for its realization.”337 Human law, for
instance, focuses on external actions—the “prohibition and punishment of sin”—to the

333 I-II 93, 1 c. Cf. I 14, 8 on God’s knowledge as the cause of things; I 39 on the Word as the “art”
of God; and I 103, 5 on the government and perfection of the divine intellect and will.

334 I-II 93, 1 ad 2, citing De trin. 15.14. Cf. similarly 93, 4 obj 2 and ad 2, citing De vera relig. 31:
the eternal law is appropriated to the Son, under whom the Father “put all things in subjection, so that God
may be all in all” (I Cor 15.28).

335 I-II 93, 3 sc.

336 I-II 98, 1 sc and c.

337 I-II 98, 1 c, citing Div. Nom. 4.
end of “the temporal tranquility of the state,” while divine law addresses not only external but internal action, to the end of “everlasting happiness.” On this account, human law can make human beings “fit to partake” of happiness, but only the grace of the Holy Spirit can confer beatitude itself—God’s own “charity poured into our hearts” (Rom 5.5), in fulfillment of the law. That is, “the old law could not confer grace, which was reserved to Christ,” according to John 1.17: “the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” The old law, while surely good, “made nothing perfect” (Heb 7.19).338

In this way, Thomas explains the purpose of the old law in entirely christological terms that take up the preceding orientation to the typological Word of Wisdom. The Father gave the old law to ordain human beings to Christ in two ways, writes Thomas. First, it bore witness to him, as he himself reports: that “everything written about me in the law..., the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled” (Lk 24.44), and again: “if you believed Moses, you would perhaps believe me, for he wrote about me” (Jn 5.46). Second, the old law disposed human beings no longer to worship idols but the one God, “by whom the human race was to be saved through Christ.”339 “The law was our pedagogue in Christ” (Gal 3.24), therefore, because he himself incarnated and demonstrated its transformative end—directly challenging the Jews “to whom the law was given” when he said: “You have made void the commandment of God for your tradition” (Mt 15.6), but also commending the word of the law several verses prior:

338 Ibid. Cf. 101, 3 ad 1 for this same text from Hebrews.
339 I-II 98, 2 c.
“honor your father and mother” (Mt 15.4). For this reason, Paul taught that the old law was “given through angels in the hand of a mediator” (Gal 3.19; cf. Acts 7.53), but “the perfect law of the New Testament” was fittingly “given by the incarnate God immediately,” as in the opening of the letter to the Hebrews: God has, in these last days, “spoken to us by a Son” (1.2).

The figural significance of the old law, ordered to the fullness of the new, may be seen most especially in the matter of worship, to which Thomas returns again and again in the following questions, in anticipation of the end of the Summa itself: that men and women are “directed to God by the worship due to him.” Here the pre- and therefore pan-historical pedagogy of the Word (following on the creative enunciation of the eternal law) finds its lingua franca, in the affirmation and commandment of Christ that “God is Spirit, and those who adore him must adore in spirit and in truth” (Jn 4.24); that is, as Thomas summarizes the import of this text: we “were taught by [Christ] to practice more perfectly the spiritual worship of God.” This way of putting the point emphasizes again, as at I-II 98, 1, that the worship prescribed by the old law served a preparatory function for the fullness of the new that was also formally contiguous. In both old and new law, for instance, worship of God incorporates internal and external aspects,

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340 I-II 98, 2 ad 1 and sc. Cf. similarly 100, 9 c on Matthew 5.22 and 100, 10 obj 1 and ad 1 on Matthew 19.17.

341 I-II 98, 3 sc and c. Aquinas again draws the contrast at the end of the corpus with reference to Hebrews 2: “if the message declared through angels was valid, and every transgression or disobedience received a just penalty, how can we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” (vv. 2-3).

342 I-II 101, 1 c.

343 I-II 101, 2 obj 4 and ad 4. Cf. 101, 3 obj 3 for another use of this text from John.
pertaining respectively to the human soul and body. “My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God,” wrote the psalmist (83.3). And since the body is “ordained” to God through the soul, outward worship is ordained to inward worship, which “consists in the soul being united to God by the intellect and affections,” a unity that, in the state of beatitude, will no longer require outward figures, as divine truth itself will be perfectly known and loved. In the present life, however, “the ray of divine light shines on us under the form of certain sensible figures,” as Dionysius taught, “according to the various states of knowledge,” and here Thomas marks the material divergence between old and new.344

Under the old law, when truth was not yet manifested, nor the way to truth disclosed (see Heb 9.8), the external worship

needed to be figurative, not only of the future truth to be manifested in our heavenly country, but also of Christ, who is the way leading to that heavenly manifestation. But under the new law this way is already revealed, and therefore needs no longer to be foreshadowed as something future but to be brought to our minds as something past or present; and the truth of the glory to come, which is not yet revealed, alone needs to be foreshadowed. This is what the Apostle says: “The law has a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of them” (Heb 10.1).345

An important part of the argument here is Thomas’s appropriation of the semiology of Augustine-cum-Dionysius: that while “words hold the first place” among human signs, in the formulation of De doctrina christiana, “the things of God cannot be manifested to human beings except by means of sensible similitudes.”346 The point already appeared incipiently—also with reference to Hebrews 10.1—at I 1, 9-10, and

344 I-II 101, 2 c, citing Cel. Hier. 1. Cf. similarly 99, 3 c and ad 3.
345 Ibid.
346 I-II 99, 3 obj 3 and ad 3, quoting DDC 2.3-4 and citing Cel. Hier. 1.
Thomas will develop it as a kind of initiating grammar for his sacramental theology at III 60 and following. Most basic to the “grammar” of the argument, however, in every case, is the location of scriptural and sacramental words in the effective precedent of the creative and incarnate Word. There is, after all, “but one God, from whom are all things..., and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things” (I Cor 8.6), including therefore “the secrets of his wisdom” and “his manifold law,” the speaking of which all of Scripture anticipates (Job 11.6; cf. 11.5). On this basis, Thomas delves into the details of the “ceremonial precepts” of the old law at great length: because the sacrifices, sacred things, sacraments, and observances of old “foreshadowed” those to follow, “all of which pertain to Christ” and “the sanctification to come.”

Given that the ceremonies of the old law were “institutions of divine wisdom” that pointed to Christ, Thomas analyzes each in turn according to the “literal” end of divine worship for a particular time and the figural or “mystical” end of christological completion. “All these things happened to them in figure, and were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come” (I Cor 10.11).

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347 I-II 101, 3 obj 1 and sc.

348 I-II 101, 4 ad 1 and ad 2. Cf. Liam G. Walsh, “Liturgy in the Theology of St. Thomas,” Thomist 38 (1974), p. 574: “it is important to study [Aquinas’s] discussion of the Praecepta Caeremonialia, not alone for the valuable general insights it has into the dynamics of liturgy but because it provides the point of reference and the terminology for his study of Christian worship. Those who would relegate the long, forbidding questions on Old Testament ceremonial to the limbo of historical curiosities run the risk of misunderstanding St. Thomas’s thinking about liturgy.”

349 I-II 102, 1 c and 2 c.

350 I-II 102, 2 sc; 102, 6 c; 103, 1 c; 104, 2 c.
1. Christ’s “true” sacrifice, the “one individual and paramount sacrifice,” provides the figurative “reason” for all the sacrifices of old, since, in Jesus’ words, “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life” (Jn 3.16). Christ therefore “delivers himself for us, a fragrant sacrifice to God” (Eph 5.2), as “living bread” (Jn 6.41 and 51);\(^{351}\) that is, he was indeed an ear of corn, as it were, during the state of the law of nature, in the faith of the patriarchs; he was like flour in the doctrine of the law of the prophets; and he was like perfect bread after he had taken human nature; baked in the fire, that is, formed by the Holy Spirit in the oven of the virginal womb; baked again in a pan by the toils which he suffered in the world; and consumed by fire on the cross as on a gridiron.\(^{352}\)

2. Christ was moreover prefigured in the tabernacle, altar, and other holy things of old because all works of virtue must be offered by us to God through him; both those whereby we afflict the body, which are offered, as it were, on the altar of holocausts; and those which, with greater perfection of mind, are offered to God in Christ by the spiritual desires of the perfect, on the altar of incense, as it were, according to Hebrews 13.15: “By him, therefore, let us always offer the sacrifice of praise to God.”\(^{353}\)

On this basis: that Christ is at once “the light of the world” (Jn 8.12) and our “living bread” (Jn 6.41 and 51), the Church is a place of teaching and sacrifice, where the “Lamb of God” (Heb 13.8) enlightens by his preaching and miracles.\(^{354}\)

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\(^{351}\) I-II 102, 3 c and ad 12.

\(^{352}\) I-II 102, 3 ad 12.

\(^{353}\) I-II 102, 4 ad 6.

\(^{354}\) Ibid. and ad 3 and 10. Yves Congar, “Saint Thomas Aquinas and the Spirit of Ecumenism,” New Blackfriars, 55/648 (1974), pp. 196-209, emphasizes at p. 204 Thomas’s perception in this text of “the spiritual nature of Christian worship, of the originality of this worship and of the sacrifice that it includes, and thus also of the priesthood that accomplishes it,” which leads Congar in turn to mark “the place of the
3. Because Christ is our sacrificed “pasch,” as Paul insists (I Cor 5.7), the sacraments of the new law follow from his passion, by which “we are delivered from sin and death” (see I Pet 1.18), even as we ought to “consider and imitate” the same passion (see Heb 13.12-13). For “all things that pertain to the Incarnation of Christ should be burnt with fire, that is, understood spiritually,” and by the theological virtues in particular we are able to “cling to Christ’s suffering.” The eating of Christ’s body in the Eucharist may be understood in this way, since the flesh of the lamb was “roasted at the fire” to signify Christ’s charity, and unleavened bread was eaten “to signify the blameless life of the faithful who partake” of his body, according to I Corinthians 5.8: “Let us feast... with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” Analogously, “by the waters of Baptism or of his tears a man washes his clothes, that is, his works, and all his hair, that is, his thoughts.”

4. Finally, even seemingly obscure ceremonial observances may be understood to touch, in some way, “the Christian mode of life,” following the example of the New Testament. For instance, the ox that treads out grain should not be muzzled (Deut 25.4;

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355 I-II 102, 5 ad 2; cf. obj 3.
356 Ibid. ad 5 and 6.
357 Ibid. ad 5.
358 Ibid. ad 2.
359 Ibid. ad 7. Cf. similarly ad 8: before ordination, priests should be purified by Baptism and by tears “in their faith in Christ’s passion, which is a sacrifice of expiation and purification.”
360 I-II 102, 6 c.
cf. I Cor 9.9); that is, “the necessities of life should not be withdrawn... from the preacher bearing the sheaves of doctrine,” as Paul teaches (see I Cor 9.4ff.). 361 Thus the law was “written for our sake,” since “whoever plows should plow in hope and whoever threshes should thresh in hope of a share in the crop” (I Cor 9.10).

In question 103, Thomas consolidates the foregoing by emphasizing that the ceremonial precepts of the old law had no power of justification apart from Christ; and since the “Incarnation and passion had not yet taken place,” these former ceremonies “do not contain grace within themselves” like the sacraments of the new law contain grace. 362 On this account, when God speaks of “a new covenant” in Jeremiah 31, “he has made the former old,” as Paul says (Heb 8.13). 363 And this may be seen, as well, by our Lord’s statement that: “It is consummated” (Jn 19.30), and “the veil of the temple was rent” (Mt 27.51), indicating that the prescriptions of the old law had ceased. In this light, Thomas reasons, before the passion, when Christ was still “preaching and working miracles, the law and the gospel were concurrent, since the mystery of Christ had already begun but was not yet consummated. On this account, our Lord, before his passion, commanded the leper to observe the legal ceremonies” (see Mt 8.4). 364

361 Ibid. obj 8 and ad 8. Cf. 108, 2 ad 3 for another citation of this text from I Corinthians.

362 I-II 103, 2 c. Thomas allows, however, that under the old law the faithful could be “united by faith to Christ incarnate and crucified,” and so be justified—“not in virtue of the sacrifices, but through the faith and devotion of those who offered them” (ibid.). Cf. similarly 106, 1 ad 3 and 3 ad 2; 107, 3 ad 1.

363 I-II 103, 3 sc.

364 I-II 103, 3 ad 2; cf. obj 2. See analogously 108, 2 obj 3 and ad 3 for a comparison of the prescribed observances of Matthew 10.9 (= Luke 9.10): “Take no gold or silver or money in your purses,” with those of Luke 22.35-36: “When I sent you without purse and bag and shoes, did you lack anything? ...But now, the one who has a purse should take it, and likewise a bag.” The change may be explained, argues Thomas, in terms of the passing away of the old law, and also in terms of Christ’s evolving.
Thomas completes his treatment of the christological pedagogy of the law in three questions on the new law that serve as a preparation for his treatment of grace.

The new law may be characterized simply as the grace of the Holy Spirit “given to those who believe in Christ;” a law therefore of “faith” (Rom 8.2), placed and inscribed by God directly in the human “mind” and “heart,” as foretold by Jeremiah (see Heb 8.10; cf. II Cor 3.3). Of course, the scriptural source of the point presumes the corroboration of secondary things—the instruction of words and writing that teach proper belief and action, “disposing” the faithful to receive and use the grace of the new law.365 Here Thomas effectively recalls the dialectical pedagogy of wisdom of I 1, 6 ad 3: that one’s learning of divine things is completed by experience of them; or, in Jesus’ words: “the gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world..., and then the consummation will come” (Mt 24.14).366 This is the “law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (Rom 8.2), who also promised in Matthew 24 “that this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place” (24.34).367 This, indeed, is the incarnated pedagogy for his disciples, who started “as little children under Christ’s care” but apparently had “become sufficiently practiced” just before his passion to warrant the abolition of the former “statutes.”

365 I-II 106, 1 sc and c. Cf. 106, 2 ad 3. Thomas’s dependence, here as ever, upon scriptural language (and, in the following articles, upon the words of Jesus), as itself an incarnated testimony to the pedagogy of the Word, relativizes the usefulness and coherence of Mark Jordan’s otherwise correct observation that Thomas here “emphasizes the subservience of particular words to saving truths” (“Competition of Authoritative Languages,” Rewritten Theology, p. 27).

366 I-II 106, 4 obj 4.

367 Ibid. ad 3 and sc.
wisdom of the Father, who would have us believe him if we believed Moses who wrote about him (Jn 5.46).\textsuperscript{368}

The words of Christ, “the author of the New Testament,” in fact effect as they exemplify the scriptural grammar of fulfillment.\textsuperscript{369} “I have come not to destroy but to fulfill,” says Jesus in Matthew; that is, “not one jot or tittle shall pass from the law until all is accomplished” (Mt 5.17-18).\textsuperscript{370} On this account, “every one of God’s promises is a ‘Yes’” in Christ (II Cor 1.20), for the ceremonial precepts were “a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ” (Col 2.17). The point should again be analyzed in terms of both “works” and “doctrine,” observes Aquinas. For instance, Christ allowed himself to be circumcised “and to fulfill the other legal observances.” And in his teaching he explained “the true sense of the law,” prescribed “the safest way of complying with it” (e.g., “by abstaining altogether from swearing, save in cases of emergency”), and also added some counsels of perfection (as in his response to the rich young man at Matthew 19.21).\textsuperscript{371} In the latter instances, there is a sense in which “the precepts of the new law are more burdensome than those of the old,” namely, insofar as Christ focused on the “interior movements of the soul” which depend upon virtue. The commandments of Christ are not burdensome, however, for those “born of God” in love (I Jn 5.1; cf. 5.3), as Christ confirms: “my yoke is sweet and my burden light” (Mt 11.28).\textsuperscript{372}

\textsuperscript{368} Ibid. obj 3 and ad 3.

\textsuperscript{369} I-II 107, 1 ad 3. Cf. 106, 1 obj 3 and ad 3.

\textsuperscript{370} I-II 107, 2 sc.

\textsuperscript{371} Ibid. c.

\textsuperscript{372} I-II 107, 4 c (also citing Augustine’s commentary on the text from I John) and sc.
Because, therefore, “the Word was made flesh... full of grace and truth,” and “of his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace” (Jn 1.14, 16), “it was becoming that the grace which flows from the incarnate Word should be given to us by means of certain external sensible objects; and that from this inward grace, whereby the flesh is subjected to the Spirit, certain external works should ensue.” The sensible means of grace are “the sacramental acts instituted in the new law—for instance, Baptism, Eucharist, and the like.” The external acts that follow from grace may be divided into those prescribed by Christ “the Lawgiver,” founded in “faith that works through love,” and those that Christ leaves to individual discretion according to the “law of perfect liberty” (Jas 1.25; cf. II Cor 3.17). In the case of the sacraments and the subsequent acts of faith in love, both are essential for the “reception” and “right use” of grace, respectively, and for that reason both follow upon Christ’s prescriptive word. Thus, Christ instituted the sacraments as means of grace because “we cannot obtain grace ourselves” except through him alone. And he prescribed certain moral precepts essential to virtue, according to the general admonition that “everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise person who built her house on a rock” (Mt 7.24). In this way, the external objects and actions of grace converge with Christ’s interior formation of the faithful, by which the human will and intention are redirected to God, thence to the fulfillment of “the teaching of the gospel,” in obedience to the word of Christ, who “is our wisest and

373 I-II 108, 1 c; cf. obj 2 and ad 2.

374 I-II 108, 2 c and sc.

375 I-II 108, 3 c, building on the citation of Matthew 7.24 in the sed contra.
greatest friend,” whose “counsels are supremely useful and becoming,” and who bids us
simply to “hear” his voice and “follow” where he leads (Jn. 10.27).\footnote{I-II 108, 4 sc and ad 3.}

That “Christ’s words contain all things necessary for human salvation”\footnote{I-II 108, 2 sc.} recalls
and further focuses the “things that are needful for them to know” of the Summa’s
general prologue, and likewise the point of I 1, 1 c: that human salvation, “which is in
God, depends upon knowledge of this truth.” Christ’s effective utterance is not only the
necessary condition but itself the \textit{logos} of sacred doctrine and sacred Scripture alike.\footnote{See again I 1, 2 ad 2; 1, 7 sc; 1, 8 c.}

Thomas’s formal discussion of grace at the end of ST I-II fittingly completes his
cumulative introduction to the principles of human acts appropriated to the context of
God’s extrinsic action in Christ the Word, to the end of human advance or return to God
as end.\footnote{I 2 prologue.}

Of course, everlasting life with God exceeds the capability of human nature,
according to I Corinthians 2.9: “no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor human heart
conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him.”\footnote{I-II 114, 2 c.} On this account, a human
being cannot on his own know “with certainty” whether or not he has grace; and the
exception of God’s revelation in particular instances—as in the Lord’s statement to Paul:
“My grace is sufficient for you” (II Cor 12.9), and in Paul’s affirmation that “we have
received... the Spirit that is from God, that we may know the gifts given to us by God,” namely, by his prior revelation “through the Spirit” (I Cor 2.12 and 10)—proves the rule.381 We may also, however, have conjectural knowledge of God’s grace by signs, notes Thomas, as when we are “conscious of delighting in God and of despising worldly things.” Thus Jesus assures the church at Pergamum that “everyone who conquers I will give the hidden manna... that no one knows except the one who receives it” (Rev 2.17), “by experiencing a certain sweetness.”382 This follows upon the general point that “the sacraments of the new law are derived from Christ... by the power of the Holy Spirit,” according to Jesus’ insistence upon “being born of water and Spirit” (Jn 3.5),383 and again, several chapters later: “everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me” (Jn 6.45).384 Moreover, reading backwards in Thomas’s argument, the instruction of “Catholic doctrine” necessarily follows this same, triune form, to the end of passing on “the word of wisdom” spoken of by Paul (I Cor 12.8), “which is the knowledge of divine things.”385

381 I-II 112, 5 c and obj 4 and ad 4.
382 Ibid. c.
383 I-II 112, 1 ad 2.
384 I-II 112, 2 ad 2 and 3 c; also 113, 3 sc. Cf. again for this text from John ST I 43, 5 ad 2, discussed in the previous chapter.
385 I-II 111, 4 sc and c.
II. The theological integrity of holiness (ST II-II)

Thomas organizes the *secunda secundae* around a detailed discussion of the theological and cardinal virtues as an “integration or enactment” of the *prima secunda.*\(^{386}\)

This may be seen no more clearly than in his persistent attention to the prescriptive grammar of the Word, in a series of questions that anticipate the christological completion of the *tertia pars.*

1. Faith

Because belief may be defined as “thought with assent,”\(^{387}\) it follows from Thomas’s trinitarian theology of language—the reflection of the image of the eternal and creative Word in our own word-formed thoughts\(^{388}\)—that the human approach to the object of faith will necessarily be complex, “by way of propositions.”\(^{389}\) Human understanding of truth depends, after all, upon “synthesis and analysis,” so that “things that are simple in themselves are known by the intellect with a certain amount of complexity.”\(^{390}\) This is especially the case with faith, the object of which is the “simple and everlasting truth”—God himself—as Dionysius says.\(^{391}\) We therefore apprehend the

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\(^{386}\) Jordan, “*Summa of Theology as Moral Formation,*” p. 125 note 25.

\(^{387}\) II-II 2, 1.

\(^{388}\) See the discussion in the preceding chapter; and Thomas’s assumption of this material at II-II 2, 1 c, with reference to Augustine, *De trin.* 15.16.

\(^{389}\) II-II 1, 2 c.


\(^{391}\) II-II 1, 1 sc, citing *Div. Nom.* 7.
truth about God in this life “through a glass in a dark manner” (I Cor 13.12), and we reason about faith either to “show that what is proposed is not impossible,” or by way of “proofs drawn from the principles of faith, that is, from the authority of sacred Scripture, as Dionysius declares.” In this way, “theology is a science, as stated at the outset of this work,” ordered by distinct articles concerning “the Trinity of persons in almighty God, the mystery of Christ’s Incarnation, and the like.” “This is eternal life: that they may know you, the ... true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (Jn 17.3), as Jesus prayed to the Father; and again, to the disciples: “Believe in God, believe also in me” (Jn 14.1).

As the latter quotations indicate, Thomas’s argument depends on the pedagogical primacy of the incarnated Word, who reorders human thought and speech after the pattern of his own person, according to John 6.45: “everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.” To come to Christ is to be “in” him (Rom 8.1), not least in terms of the “enlightenment” of faith. On this basis, the simple may depend upon the learned just insofar as “the latter adhere to the divine teaching,” as in Paul’s instructive

\[\text{\textsuperscript{392}}\text{II-II 1, 2 obj 3. Cf. 1, 5 c.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{393}}\text{II-II 1, 5 ad 2, citing Div. Nom. 2.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{394}}\text{II-II 1, 6 ad 1; cf. 1, 7 c and 8 c.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{395}}\text{II-II 1, 8 c. Cf. similarly 2, 8 obj 2, quoting John 17.5-6, and ad 2: “Before Christ’s coming, faith in the Trinity lay hidden in the faith of the learned, but through Christ and the apostles it was shown to the world.”}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{396}}\text{II-II 1, 9 obj 5.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{397}}\text{II-II 2, 3 c. Cf. again 8, 5 sc for this text from John.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{398}}\text{Ibid. ad 2.}\]
assurance to the Corinthians: “Be followers of me as I am of Christ” (I Cor 4.16). And Christ intercedes to ensure faithful obedience, as in his prayer for Peter that his “faith may not fail” (Lk 22.32);\(^\text{399}\) just as Christ commissions teachers to testify to his truth, like John the Baptist, of whom Christ said that “there has not risen among those born of women one greater than he” (Mt 11.11).\(^\text{400}\) Upon seeing Christ incarnate, John immediately points to the passion (tied to Baptism): “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (Jn 1.29), and then testifies to his faith in Christ as the “Son of God” (Jn 1.34). In this light, John’s inquiry of Jesus, conveyed by John’s disciples: “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” (Mt 11.3; cf. Lk 7.19), may be understood not as an admission of ignorance on John’s part but as an expression of his devotion, as Ambrose suggested; or, in Chrysostom’s interpretation, as a provocation to the satisfaction of his disciples on the matter, “through Christ,” who “framed his answer so as to instruct the disciples, by pointing to the signs of his works.”\(^\text{401}\)

In every case, the dependence of the word of faith upon the Word of God is basic, beginning with the necessity of “outward utterance to signify the inward thought.” “Having the same spirit of faith, in accordance with Scripture: ‘I believed, and so I spoke’ (Ps 115.1), we also believe, and so we speak,” writes Paul (II Cor 4.13).\(^\text{402}\) The word of faith is however first of all “heard,” and so properly “accepted not as a human
word, but as what it really is, God’s word, which is also at work in you believers” (I Thess 2.13; cf. Rom 10.17) —establishing believers in the truth, as Dionysius taught, in order that they might in turn show it forth. In this way, Christian faith is held “by a willed assent to Christ in those things which truly belong to his doctrine,” incorporating “the inward instinct of the divine invitation” which moves the believer to faith by grace.

2. Wisdom

Thomas returns to the gift of wisdom at the end of his treatment of charity (the mother and root of all the virtues and gifts), in a discussion that may be read as a completion of his original handling of the matter at I 1, 6 ad 3, now ordered explicitly to the Christology of the tertia pars. Again, that person is wise who, like the architect, lays a foundation (I Cor 3.10). The gift of wisdom does not pertain to expertise in a particular field, however, but rather to knowledge of God, the highest cause, on the basis of which one can “judge and set in order all things” (cf. I Cor 2.15), through the Holy Spirit, as Paul also says: “these things”—namely, that “no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor human heart conceived”—“God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches

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403 II-II 4, 8 sc. On Romans 10.17 (“faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ”), see 4, 8 obj 2 and ad 2; 5, 1 obj 2 and ad 3; 6, 1 obj 2; 8, 6 c.

404 II-II 4, 1 c, citing Div. Nom. 7.

405 II-II 11, 1 c.

406 II-II 2, 9 ad 3 and c.

407 II-II 45, 1 c. Cf. I 1, 6 c.
everything, even the depths of God” (I Cor 2.9-10).\textsuperscript{408} In this way, unlike the acquired intellectual virtue, the gift of wisdom “descends from above” (Jas 3.15) without human effort, as a “supernatural knowledge of divine things,” incorporating faith.\textsuperscript{409}

Again, therefore, Thomas clearly commends this kind of wisdom for the peculiar end of sacred doctrine. Just insofar as the student not only reflects upon the faith per studium but through it is conformed to Christ in charity,\textsuperscript{410} she has by definition been given the gift of the Holy Spirit “to judge rightly about divine things on account of connaturality with them,” according to I Corinthians 6:17: “Anyone joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him;”\textsuperscript{411} or, in the familiar words of Dionysius, here quoted again by Thomas: Hierotheus was perfect in divine things “not only by learning about but by suffering” them.\textsuperscript{412} As experienced, wisdom is a “sweet-tasting science (\textit{sapida scientia})” (Sir 6.23), as Thomas already argued at I 43, 5 ad 2, in his discussion of the knowledge (with love) of the Word, Wisdom incarnate.\textsuperscript{413} As he puts the point here:

persons are called children of God insofar as they participate in the likeness of the only-begotten and natural Son of God, according to Romans 8.29: “Whom he foreknew to be made conformable to the image of his Son,” who is Wisdom begotten. Hence, by participating the gift of Wisdom, human beings attain to the sonship of God.\textsuperscript{414}

\textsuperscript{408} Ibid. Cf. I 1, 1 c and 1, 6 ad 3.

\textsuperscript{409} Ibid. obj 2 and ad 2.

\textsuperscript{410} See again I 1, 6 ad 3 and 8 ad 2.

\textsuperscript{411} II-II 45, 2 c.

\textsuperscript{412} Ibid., from \textit{Div. Nom.} 2. Cf. I 1, 6 ad 3.

\textsuperscript{413} Ibid. obj 2 and ad 1 and 2.

\textsuperscript{414} II-II 45, 6 c.
In this case, furthermore, in a text reminiscent of I 1, 4 (on sacred doctrine as first of all speculative and secondly practical): “from the very fact that wisdom as a gift is more excellent than wisdom as an intellectual virtue, since it attains to God more intimately by a kind of union of the soul with him, it directs one not only in contemplation but also in action.” To be sure, some receive “a higher degree of the gift of wisdom” as a gratuitous grace, described by Paul as “the word of wisdom” (I Cor 12.8; cf. I Cor 2.6-7), to do with “the contemplation of divine things (by both knowing more exalted mysteries and being able to impart this knowledge to others) and the direction of human affairs according to divine rules (by direction of themselves and others according to those rules).” In every case, however, wisdom is a feature of sanctifying grace which “presupposes charity,” and on that account glories in the one who “was made for us wisdom from God” (I Cor 1.30).

3. Religion

Following his treatment of the theological virtues in questions 1-46, Thomas turns in questions 47-122 to prudence and justice, with twenty questions on “religion”

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415 II-II 45, 3 ad 1.
416 II-II 45, 5 c; cf. ibid. obj 1 and ad 1.
417 II-II 45, 4 c; cf. 45, 5 c. See again 45, 2 c: “wisdom, as a gift, has its cause in the will, namely charity, but has its essence in the intellect, whose act is to judge rightly.”
418 Ibid. ad 1. Cf. Thomas’s introduction to charity at II-II 23, 1: the communication between human beings and God is the basis of our friendship, according to I Corinthians 1.9 (and see Jesus’ statement at John 15.15); and charity likewise follows on this communication, since “charity is friendship” (23, 1 sc).
appropriated to the latter virtue.419 Here Thomas rejoins the foregoing Corinthian and Dionysian dynamic of participation by the faithful in God through Christ, following the transformation of grace.

Religion consists of “proper and immediate acts... by which men and women are directed to God alone, for instance, sacrifice, adoration, and the like,” as well as other acts of virtue that honor God, such as “visiting the fatherless and widows in their tribulation,” in the words of James (1.27).420 Strictly, therefore, “religion seems to denote not any kind of worship but the worship of God,” as Augustine wrote.421 And yet religion does not take God as its matter or object but as its end, since it is a moral virtue (and not a theological virtue) “which is properly about things referred to the end.”422 For this reason, religion concerns itself with the coincidence of external and internal actions, in accordance with the psalm: “My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God” (83.3), the external things offered “as signs of the internal and spiritual works, which are of themselves acceptable to God.” In Augustine’s statement: “The visible sacrifice is the sacrament or sacred sign of the invisible sacrifice.”423 And, in the words of Jesus

419 Cf. the earlier discussion at I-II 60, 3 c, where Thomas defined religion as “paying our debt to God.” II-II 81 marks a much more thorough introduction and definition of terms.

420 II-II 81, 1 ad 1, in light of obj 1.

421 Ibid. ad 2, quoting De civ. Dei 10.1.

422 II-II 81, 5 c.

423 II-II 81, 7 sc and ad 2, quoting De civ. Dei 10.5.
(previously quoted by Thomas in his discussion of the ceremonial precepts): “God is Spirit, and those who adore him must adore in spirit and in truth” (Jn 4.24).424

Religion is, in other words, “the same as sanctity,” which is “ascribed to those things that are applied to the divine worship..., not only men and women but also the temple, vessels, and such like things that are said to be sanctified through being applied to the worship of God.”425 “Sanctity is free from all uncleanness, and is perfect and altogether unspotted purity,” wrote Dionysius.426 Of course, one must be moved to devote oneself wholly to God, and God himself is the “extrinsic and chief cause of devotion,” not least because of human shortcomings and weakness.427 God therefore guides the human mind

not only to the knowledge but also to the love of divine things, by means of certain sensible objects known to us. Chief among these is the humanity of Christ, according to the words of the Preface [for Christmastide], “that through knowing God visibly we may be caught up to the love of things invisible.”428

In this way, Thomas returns to the sacramentality of the Incarnation as a gift to the faithful, to aid their own imitative passions. Prayer is, after all, speech, as Isidore taught, and speech belongs to the intellect.429 Hence Dionysius says that “when we call upon God in our prayers, we unveil our mind in his presence,” that is, “prayer is the

\[424 \text{Ibid. obj 1 and ad 1. Cf. I-II 101, discussed above; and again, II-II 83, 5 ad 1 and 83, 13 obj 1 for this same text.}

\[425 \text{II-II 81, 8 sc and c.}

\[426 \text{Ibid. obj 2, quoting Div. Nom 12.}

\[427 \text{II-II 82, 3 c, in light of 82, 1.}


\[429 \text{II-II 83, 1 sc, quoting Etym. 10. Cf., however, 83, 12 and 14 on prayer as vocal and non-vocal.}
raising up of the mind to God,"^430 who himself taught his followers to “pray always, and not faint” (Lk 18.1),^431 and to ask for their daily bread, understood either as “the sacramental bread, the daily use of which is profitable to men and women, and in which all the other sacraments are contained, or the bread of the body, which denotes all sufficiency of food, as Augustine says, since the Eucharist is the chief sacrament and bread is the chief food.”^432 On every count, the outward utterance of prayer is ordered toward the “inward spiritual sacrifice, whereby the soul offers itself to God, according to Psalm 51.18: ‘A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit.’”^433 Here again, the end in view is an “effective or experimental knowledge of God’s will or goodness,” whereby one may “experience in herself the taste of God’s sweetness, and complacence in God’s will, as Dionysius says of Hierotheus: that ‘he learned divine things through experience of them’ (didicit divina ex compassione ad ipsa). It is in this way that we are told to prove God’s will, and to taste his sweetness.”^434

The whole of the tertia pars will develop this point: God’s intelligible and sensible—sacramental—curriculum unto sanctification, via the passion of the Word.

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^430 Ibid. ad 2, quoting Div. Nom. 3.

^431 II-II 83, 2 sc. Cf. 83, 14 sc on this same text.

^432 II-II 83, 9 c, quoting Ep. 130.11.

^433 II-II 85, 2 c.

^434 II-II 97, 2 ad 2.
CHAPTER 5:

WORD INCARNATE AND CRUCIFIED: ST III 1-59

The first 59 questions of the *tertia pars* treat Jesus Christ as savior in two broad movements: the Incarnation itself (questions 1-26), and all that Christ did and suffered (questions 27-59). Thomas retrospectively summarizes these questions at III 60 proem, noting that they handled “those things that concern the mystery of the incarnate Word.” This latter phrase usefully reflects the fact that the savior described in questions 1-59 is the person of the Word, a point emphasized by Thomas at the outset of his treatment of the sacraments because they follow upon and from this same divine person. Since the whole of the *tertia pars* is given to the Word, it makes sense for Thomas first to establish Christ’s identity, and then to treat the events of his life, as the frame for our graced participation in and imitation of him, who “shows us in his own person the way of truth,

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435 III prologue.
436 III 60 prologue.
437 As is clear when the excerpted phrase from III 60 prologue is replaced in the context of the whole sentence: “After considering those things that concern the mystery of the incarnate Word, we must consider the sacraments of the Church which derive their efficacy from the same Word incarnate.” The whole of the following chapter is given to explicating Thomas’s sacramentology in the light of this sentence.
whereby we may attain to the bliss of eternal life by rising again.”438 Arriving at this stage of the argument of the Summa, Thomas is poised “to complete the work of theology,” in the incarnate and crucified Logos.439

I. The incarnate Word of Wisdom (QQ. 1-15)

Thomas begins his investigation of the Incarnation with a question on its fittingness, which therefore serves as an apologia for its reason or purpose. First of all, that God should become incarnate fits with his nature as goodness, since “it belongs to the essence of goodness to communicate itself to others,” as Dionysius argues.440 It was also necessary for God to save human beings from sin and death, however, and “there was not a more fitting way of healing our misery,” writes Augustine, than for the Word to become incarnate.441 This may be seen in terms of our “furtherance in good,” and Thomas draws from several of the bishop of Hippo’s writings five ways in which this is


439 Ibid.: “necesse est ut, ad consummationem totius theologici negotii, post considerationem ultimi finis humanae vitae et virtutum ac vitiorum, de ipso omnium salvatore ac beneficiis eius humano generi praestitis nostra consideratio subsequatur.” This sentence from III prologue should be read in light of the whole of I 1, and especially I 1, 7 sc (“in hac scientia fit sermo de Deo; dicitur enim theologia, quasi sermo de Deo”), on which see chapter 2, above. On the similarity of III prologue to the prologue at I 2, see Wawrykow, “Wisdom,” p. 190 and note 49.

440 1, 1 c, citing Div. Nom. 1 and 4.

441 1, 2 c, quoting De trin. 13.10; cf. 1, 2 sc and ad 2.

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true, all of which pertain to the salvific pedagogy of the incarnate Word: (i) that our faith
“is made more certain by believing God himself who speaks,” whence we are able to trust
the incarnate Son of God who is truth, who “established and founded faith;” (ii) that our
hope is strengthened by the demonstration of God’s love in his Son’s human partnership
with us; (iii) that our charity is enkindled by God’s display of love in the coming of the
Lord; (iv) that he set us an example of well-doing by appearing as a man whom we might
follow; and (v) that he was made human in order that men and women might be made
God, “which is the true bliss of human beings and the end of our life.” Similarly, the
fittingness of the Incarnation of the Word may be seen in terms of our “withdrawal from
evil,” as Augustine says, because (i) we are thereby taught not to prefer the devil and (ii)
taught the greatness of human dignity; because (iii) the grace of Christ does away with
our presumption and (iv) his humility cures our pride; and because (v) Jesus Christ, God
and man, enacts the justice of satisfaction for us, as only he could do.

Thomas fills out the foregoing by reflecting on the wisdom of the time of the
Incarnation: that the Word ought to have taken flesh neither at the beginning of the
human race nor at the end of the world. Paul writes: “when the fullness of time had come,
God sent his Son, born of a woman” (Gal 4.4), that is, the Father “decreed” that the time
was propitious, as a gloss says. But God decrees everything by his wisdom, notes
Thomas—the wise Word who, as incarnate, declares that he came not “to call the just,
but sinners” (Mt 9.13). He therefore ought not to have become incarnate before the advent of sin. And immediately after its advent he ought not to have come, in order to humble human beings, that they might see their need of a deliverer. In this way, the Word’s teaching aids our perfection, argues Paul: the physical comes first, “and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven” (I Cor 15.46-47). Indeed, the Word incarnate raises human nature to its “highest perfection,” as an efficient cause, according to John 1.16: “Of his fullness we have all received.” And on this account, “the work of the Incarnation ought not to have been put off till the end of the world. But the perfection of glory to which human nature is finally to be raised by the Word incarnate will be at the end of the world.” The curriculum of wisdom therefore spans the history of redemption, as the “principle” and the “terminus” of perfection, and remains in place during the time between the two for the faithful who have (recalling a theme from earlier in the Summa) attended to “the word about the cross” and “received the Spirit,” and yet remain in need of “milk, not solid food,” from time to time (I Cor 1.18, 2.12, and 3.2); the faithful to whom, Jesus promises, God will grant justice and show mercy if they are among the “chosen ones who cry to him day and night” (Lk 18.7; cf. Rom 9.16).

445 Ibid. c.
446 1, 6 c.
447 1, 6 ad 2.
448 See chapter 2, above, esp. sec. II.
449 1, 5 c and ad 2, reading around Thomas’s citation of Luke 18.8 in light of the subsequent Augustinian reflection on predestination in Paul.
Having introduced the wise purpose of the Incarnation of the Word, Thomas turns in questions 2-15 to a dogmatic understanding of the “mode of union”: that the Word was incarnated not by changing into flesh but by uniting itself personally to flesh. As articulated and upheld at the Fifth Council at Constantinople, and again at Ephesus, the Word “received no augment of person or subsistence,” a crucial point if the words of “the evangelical and apostolic Scriptures,” and the words that “have been said of Christ by the saints, or by himself of himself,” are to be understood with reference to one and not several persons. In this way, the heresies of Nestorius and Theodore of Mopsuestia are avoided, who “held the person of the Son of God to be distinct from the person of the Son of man,” heresies that “some more recent masters” unwittingly fell into, observes Thomas, as in the so-called “first opinion” of Peter Lombard: that a man was “from the beginning of his conception assumed by the Word of God.” Were this the case, the Church might teach that Christ was first of all a mere man, and that afterwards by the merits of a good life it was granted him to become the Son of God, as Photinus held. But we hold that from the beginning of his conception this man was truly the Son of God, seeing that he had no other hypostasis but that of the Son of God, according to Luke 1.35: “the holy child to be born of you will be called the Son of God.”

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450 2, 1 ad 3.
451 2, 3 c.
452 2, 6 c.
453 2, 11 c.
Thomas thus builds his Christology of the Word on the earlier, trinitarian argument for *Word* as a personal, not essential, name. Because a word is the “concept of the intellect,” as argued at I 34, the Word of God “proceeded from something other than itself, namely, from the knowledge of the one conceiving,” and all things are contained in this knowledge, including creatures.\(^{454}\) This, in turn, presents the properly theological pattern for human sanctification, after the image of the Word of wisdom, who promises that “everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me” (Jn 6.45).\(^{455}\) Rejoining the argument in scriptural terms at III 3, 8, Thomas notes that, of the several divine persons, the Son was most fittingly incarnated because all creatures have “a certain common agreement” with him after the likeness of the exemplary Word. Just as “the craftsman, by the intelligible form of his art” with which “he fashioned his handiwork, restores it when it has fallen into ruin,” the Word, by personal union with a creature, restores it “to its eternal and unchangeable perfection.” Human beings, as rational, are thus perfected “by participating the Word of God, as the disciple is instructed by receiving the word of his master,” according to Sirach 1.5: “The Word of God on high is the foundation of wisdom.” That is, human wisdom is derived from “the eternal Wisdom” which is “appropriated to the Son,” “the power of God and the wisdom of God” (I Cor 1.24), in Paul’s familiar proclamation.\(^{456}\)

\(^{454}\) I 34, 1 c and ad 3.

\(^{455}\) I 43, 5 ad 2 in light of I 93. Cf. on John 6.45 I-II 112, 2 ad 2 and 3 c; 113, 3 sc; and II-II 2, 3 c and 8, 5 sc.

\(^{456}\) 3, 8 c and sc; cf. 7, 7 obj 2 and ad 2 and 32, 1 obj 3. Another reason offered by Thomas for the fittingness of the Son’s assumption of human nature resembles the first reason, mentioned above: because “the first man sinned by seeking knowledge..., it was fitting that by the Word of true wisdom human beings
It is hard to overemphasize the importance of Aquinas’s decision to treat the person of the Word assuming before coming, already at question 4, to the human nature assumed.⁴⁵⁷ A proper understanding of the event of Incarnation requires, first, an identification of the Word as the divine actor who fittingly takes flesh to himself because of his prior, primary role in creation under the sign of wisdom. The salvific efficacy of the Incarnation follows, logically and chronologically, from this fact, and so must be treated second: the possibility of human salvation depends upon a refashioned human nature after the pattern of God in Christ. As always, Thomas, like Scripture, places the movement or return of human beings to God in a theological context, according to which God is the primary actor and initiator of reunion. Now, however, Aquinas also articulates might be led back to God, having wandered from God through an inordinate thirst for knowledge” (ibid. in the corpus). And see ad 2 for an elaboration of the argument from creation, also mentioned in the first reason of the corpus: “The first creation of things was made by the power of God the Father through the Word; hence the second creation ought to have been brought about through the Word, by the power of God the Father, in order that restoration should correspond to creation according to II Corinthians 5.19: ‘God indeed was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.’” On the importance of this article for Thomas’s pedagogical purposes in this section of the tertia pars, see Wawrykow, “Wisdom in the Christology of Thomas Aquinas,” and discussion of this essay in chapter 1, above. Cf. Thomas R. Potvin, The Theology of the Primacy of Christ According to St. Thomas Aquinas and its Scriptural Foundations (Studia Friburgensia n.s. 50; Fribourg, 1973), passim, including pp. 280-98, “Appendix II: Creation in wisdom literature,” for a study of Old Testament texts on wisdom (Proverbs 8, the Wisdom of Ben Sirach, and the book of Wisdom) in light of Potvin’s preceding study of Thomas’s appropriation of these themes in the Summa, especially in the questions on the Trinity and creation from the prima pars and on Christ in the tertia pars (including III 3, 8 c: see esp. pp. 184-90). Potvin concludes: “Wisdom literature, no doubt, prepared the revelation of Christ, the Wisdom of God, and this according to the plan of God. But, it is only with the event-Christ that this revelation was brought into perfect focus. That which, on the level of the Old Testament, might be termed a form of ‘modalism,’ revealed itself, in the light of the New Testament, [to] be the Father’s eternal generation of the Son to whom is appropriated Wisdom precisely because he is the Word in whom is spoken the whole of the Trinity as well as the whole of creation” (p. 298). Cf. Potvin’s earlier comments at ibid., p. 109ff., especially as applied to sacred doctrine in Thomas at p. 123ff. Potvin follows especially for his account of sacred doctrine Yves Congar, “Le moment ‘économique’ et le moment ‘ontologique’ dans la Sacra Doctrina (Révélaiton, Théologie, Somme Théologique),” Mélanges offertes à M.-D. Chenu: Maître en théologie (Paris: Vrin, 1967).

⁴⁵⁷ 4 prologue, in the first sentence: “We must now consider the union on the part of what was assumed.”
the precise “mode of union” as a condition upon human sanctification, because the
Word’s having taken to himself a body and soul makes it possible for human beings to be
conformed to the same Word.

For this reason, Thomas begins question 4 by considering again the fittingness of
the Incarnation from the perspective of the assumed human nature, its dignity and need.
In terms of dignity, human nature, as “rational and intellectual, was made for attaining to
the Word to some extent by its operation, namely, by knowing and loving him,” unlike
irrational creatures who lack this dignity. Similarly, in terms of need, human nature
requires “restoration” due to sin, in contrast with angelic nature. On both counts, the
pattern of redemption follows a prior order of creation, namely, the hierarchical relation
of Word to rational creatures, the latter composed of mind and body. “The Word is the
fountain of life, as the first effective cause of life,” writes Thomas, “but the soul is the
principle of the life of the body, as its form.”

The point may be put in the spatial terms of Scripture, first with reference to the
radical dependence of creatures on their creator: that Christ the Word comes down from
heaven, in order that men and women might also be raised after him, as John 3.13
implies: “No man has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven,
the Son of Man, who is in heaven.” It pertains to the greatest glory of God to have

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458 4, 1 c.
459 5, 3 ad 2.
460 5, 2 ad 1.
raised a weak and earthly body to such sublimity,” writes Thomas.\textsuperscript{461} At another level, the Word took to himself both a body and soul—and in that sense “was made flesh” (Jn 1.14)—because both parts of the human person stand in need of “liberation,” in a conjoined manner. The soul, endowed with reason, is “higher” and “nobler” than the body, hence the sin of the soul is “worse,” as Augustine observed. On this account, as a feature of his wisdom and love, Christ assumed a soul, “not despising what was better and more capable of prudence,” and likewise “protecting what was most wounded.”\textsuperscript{462} But that which is “not assumed is not curable,” wrote Damascene,\textsuperscript{463} whence Christ also “united flesh to himself, through the medium of the soul.”\textsuperscript{464} All together, “the whole manhood of Christ,” his soul and his body, “influences” the faithful who are his members, “principally” in their souls and “secondarily” in their bodies. For “the ‘members of the body are presented as instruments of justice’ in the soul that lives through Christ, as the Apostle says (Rom 6.13),” and “the life of glory flows from the soul to the body, according to Romans 8.11: ‘He who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also because of his Spirit that dwells in you.’”\textsuperscript{465}

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{461} Ibid. ad 3.
\textsuperscript{462} 5, 3 obj 1 and ad 1 and c, quoting Question 80 of the \textit{83 QQ}, and a work by Vigilius Tapsensis (thought by Thomas to be of Augustinian provenance), \textit{Contra Felician}. 13. Cf. similarly 5, 4 ad 3; 6, 1 ad 1.
\textsuperscript{463} 5, 4 c.
\textsuperscript{464} 6, 1 c.
\textsuperscript{465} 8, 2 c.
\end{footnotes}
The Word’s assumption of human nature thus initiates the “perfection” of the human mind, thence the perfection of human persons. 466 “Christ is the first and chief teacher of spiritual doctrine and faith,” writes Thomas, for the Lord “declared” the message of salvation to “those who heard him” (Heb 2.3). 467 Of course, he himself was “perfected through sufferings” by God, for the salvation of “many children” (Heb 2.10); 468 “even as man,” he knew the Father and kept “his word” (Jn 8.55). 469 In this way, he is the “true light which enlightens every man” (Jn 1.9), and in him “are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2.3): 470 “‘because he is the Son of Man,’ as is said at John 5.27; and therefore the soul of Christ knows in the Word all things existing in whatever time,” just as “every created intellect knows in the Word—not all simply, but so many more things the more perfectly it sees the Word.” 471 “All things were made” by him (Jn 1.3), 472 not least in that “all the blessed” see the divine essence “by partaking of the

466 5, 4 ad 1 and 2; cf. 6, 2 c and 7, 7.


468 9, 2 c.

469 Ibid. sc.

470 9, 1 ad 2 and 3 sc.

471 10, 2 c. Cf. 9, 3-4 for Thomas’s earlier argument regarding the incarnate Christ’s infused or imprinted and acquired knowledge, quoting Hebrews 5.8 at 9, 4 sc: “He learned obedience by the things which he suffered,” that is, “experienced,” as a gloss says. Cf. 13, 2 for an argument from Hebrews 1.3: “he sustains all things by his powerful word,” who “is the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of his being.”

472 Ibid. ad 1.
divine light which is shed upon them from the fountain of the Word of God” (see Sir 1.5), the only-begotten Word “of the Father, full of grace and truth” (Jn 1.14). 473

II. Word of the Father (QQ. 20-24)

In questions 16-26, Thomas turns to the “consequences” of the union of the Word with human nature, including Christ’s relation to the Father. 474 Particularly in the questions on Christ’s prayer, priesthood, and adoption (questions 21-23), Thomas reflects further on God’s establishment of Christ “as the head of the church [and] of all human beings… so that all might receive not only grace through him but the doctrine of truth from him.” 475 Accordingly, question 20 frames the discussion to follow in terms of Christ’s subjection to the Father in his human nature, as may be seen in our Lord’s statements at Matthew 19.17, John 8.29, and John 14.28; in Paul’s teaching at Philippians 2; and in commentary on these by Augustine and Dionysius. 476 And the incarnated Word is also “greater than” and “master” of himself in his human nature, notes Thomas, since, in his divine nature, “he presides and rules with the Father.” For this reason, “we say that

473 10, 4 c. Cf. similarly 12, 3 c, quoting John 18.37: “For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth.”
474 16 prologue.
475 12, 3 c.
476 20, 1 sc and c, quoting De trin. 1.7-8 and 6.8, and Div. Nom. 1 and Cel. Hier. 4. Cf. similarly 20, 2 sc, quoting John 20.17.
Christ is simply ‘greatest,’ ‘Lord,’ and ‘Ruler,’ whereas to be ‘subject’ or ‘servant’ or ‘less’ is attributed to him with the qualification in his human nature.\footnote{20, 2 sc and c.}

Christ the Word prayed “as man and as having a human will,” to be sure.\footnote{21, 1 c.} “Being both God and man,” however, “he wished to offer prayers to the Father not as though he were incompetent but for our instruction,” on two counts. First, he wished to “show himself to be from the Father,” as in John 11.42, where, after addressing the Father, Jesus continues: “I have said this for the sake of the people who stand about, that they may believe that you sent me.” On this account, Hilary concludes that Christ “did not need prayer. He prayed for our sake, lest the Son should be unknown.” Second, Christ prayed in order to give us an example. As Ambrose wrote of Jesus’ spending the night on a mountain in prayer to God (see Lk 6.12): “Be not deceived, nor think that the Son of God prays as a weakling, in order to beseech what he cannot effect. The author of power, the master of obedience, persuades us to the precepts of virtue by his example.” And Augustine concurs: “Our Lord, in the form of a servant, could have prayed in silence, if need be; but he wished to show himself a suppliant of the Father, in order to remind us that he is our teacher.”\footnote{Ibid. ad 1, quoting Hilary, De trin. 10; Ambrose on Luke 6.12; and Augustine, Tract 104 on John. Cf. similarly 21, 3 ad 1 for more on John 11.42 and the same text of Hilary.}

Both reasons for Christ’s prayer pertain to his petition to “let this chalice pass from me” (Mt 26.39), a text that animated Thomas’s treatment of Christ’s unity of will,
several questions earlier. In this petition, Christ “prayed with his sensuality” to teach us three things: “that he had taken a true human nature, with all its natural affections,” “that a person may wish with his natural desire what God does not wish,” and “that men and women should subject their wills to the divine will.” The first two lessons set the stage for the third, as expressed in the completion of Christ’s passion plea: “Nevertheless, not as I will but as you will” (Mt 26.39; cf. Lk 22.42). This last statement reflects the wish for human beings to be “righteous and directed to God,” writes Augustine, as if Christ were saying to us: “See yourself in me; you can desire something proper to you, even though God wishes something else.” Similarly, both reasons for Christ’s prayer—his being from the Father and his setting an example for us—pertain to his prayer for himself by his “deliberate will,” as in John 17.1: “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you.” Here Christ showed “that his Father is the author both of his eternal procession in the divine nature and of all the good that he possesses in the human nature,” including the good “still due to him..., such as the glory of his body and the like.” And in this way he demonstrates “that we should give thanks for benefits received, and ask in prayer for those we have not as yet.” Moreover, by praying for his own glorification, Christ sought “the salvation of others, according to Romans 4.25: ‘He rose again for our justification,’” which yields a basic principle of

\[\text{\textsuperscript{480}}\text{Question 18; see 18, 1 sc and 5 c, the former quoting from the parallel to Matthew at Luke 22.42.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{481}}\text{21, 2 c, quoting sermon 1 on Psalm 32 in the \textit{Enchiridion}.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{482}}\text{21, 3 sc and c.}\]
prayer: that “asking a boon of God in order to use it for the good of others” amounts to a prayer for both us and them.\textsuperscript{483}

Though Christ prayed that the chalice might pass from him, therefore, in the end he freely chose the character of his passion, and meant to commend it to his faithful followers, as well: that they also might “offer up prayers with strong cries and tears” and be “heard” because of their “reverence” (Heb 5.7).\textsuperscript{484} In this perspective, Hilary reasonably suggests that Christ effectively prays “that others may share in that which passes on from him to them”—that, in other words, “other martyrs might be imitators of his passion”—“so that the sense is: ‘As I am partaking of the chalice of the passion, so may others drink of it with unfailing hope, with unflinching anguish, without fear of death.’” And Dionysius of Alexandria seizes on a similar (albeit less dramatically ascetical) interpretation: that when Christ spoke of the \textit{removal} of the chalice from him, he indicated that “a slightly pressing trial may be repulsed.”\textsuperscript{485}

Turning to Christ’s priesthood, Thomas develops the foregoing in terms of the passional form of the sacraments, based again upon Christ’s effective utterance, a point that will form the basis of III 60 and following. He was most fittingly a priest—“a great high-priest” (Heb 4.14), who “gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Eph 5.2).\textsuperscript{486} He is therefore at once the priest and the victim of the Church’s

\textsuperscript{483} \textit{Ibid.} ad 3.

\textsuperscript{484} 21, 4 sc. Cf. 21, 3 ad 2.

\textsuperscript{485} 21, 4 ad 1, quoting Hilary, \textit{Super Matth.} 31 and Dionysius, \textit{De martyr. ad Origen} 7.

\textsuperscript{486} 22, 1 sc and 2 sc.
sacrifice, to such an extent that the two are “not distinct;” he serves as the mediator between God and human beings, the holy (sacerdos) giver of holy things (sacra dans) by his “mouth” (Mal 2.7), “as he offers up the people’s prayers to God” and “makes satisfaction for their sins.” Indeed, he is “the fountainhead of the entire priesthood: for the priest of the old law was a figure of him; while the priest of the new law works in his person, according to II Corinthians 2.10: ‘What I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I have done for your sake in the person of Christ.’” In this way, Christ is in his person the “great and precious promise” of the Father, through which we “may be made partakers of the divine nature” (II Pet 1.4); the Word of God who, as Augustine observed, was “one with him to whom” and “united in himself for” those whom the sacrifice was offered, and at the same time was the offerer and the offering. Through him God “reconciles all things to himself” (Col 1.20), the “visible sign” marking “the invisible sacrifice,” in Augustine’s definition of a sacrament, by which human beings similarly offer their spirits to God, according to Psalm 51.17: “A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit.” Through our own imitative sacrifices, “we have confidence to enter

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487 22, 3 ad 2.
488 22, 4 c.
489 22, 1 c.
490 22, 3 ad 1, quoting De trin. 4.14. Cf. 48, 3 c for this same text from Augustine.
491 22, 1 c and 2 c, quoting De civ. Dei 10.5. See the following chapter for further quotations of this Augustinian text, starting with III 60, 1 sc.
the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus” (Heb 10.19), who “obtained a result from his passion... by the devotion with which, out of charity, he humbly endured” it.

With respect to our adoption by God in Christ, Thomas begins by recalling that “rational creatures, ... made to the image of God, are capable of divine beatitude,” and that Christ is the image of the Father, as Paul teaches (see Rom 8.29). On this account, when human beings are adopted by God, they may also be said to be “begotten, by reason of the spiritual regeneration which is by grace,” according to James 1.18: “Of his own will he has begotten us by the word of truth.” That is, we are made to be sons and daughters of “the whole Trinity,” but with “a certain likeness of the eternal Sonship,” who is the “exemplar,” the “intellectual Word” of the Father. To be sure, simply by dint of creation, “every creature is like the eternal Word,” through whom all things were made; and rational creatures more particularly are likened to the Word in terms of intelligibility. Only by “grace and charity,” however, can rational creatures be likened to the Word as he is one with the Father, according to our Lord’s prayer at John 17: “May they be one in us... as we also are one.” This last, therefore, marks the perfection of adoption; in light of which we can also understand the “term” and “effect” of human predestination, after the exemplary precedent of the incarnate Word’s. “For he was

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492 22, 2 c.
493 22, 4 ad 2. Cf. 22, 5.
494 23, 1 c and ad 2. Cf. 23, 3 and 24, 3.
495 23, 2 c.
496 23, 2 ad 2 and 3.
497 23, 3 c.
predestined to be the natural Son of God, whereas we are predestined to the adoption of sons, which is a participated likeness of natural sonship;” and again, in terms of grace: “without any antecedent merits, human nature was united to the Son of God; and of the fullness of his grace we have all received, as it says at John 1.16.”\(^{498}\) Moreover, in terms of cause, God decreed that our salvation “should be achieved through Jesus Christ.”\(^{499}\)

III. Bearing the crucified Word of Wisdom (QQ. 42, 46-49)

The prologue of question 27 sets forth the outline of the second broad movement of Thomas’s treatment of Jesus Christ as savior, spanning questions 27-59: all that “the Incarnate Son did or suffered in the human nature united to him.”\(^{500}\) Thomas divides the subject into four parts: Christ’s coming into the world (27-39), his life (40-45), his leaving the world (46-52), and his exaltation after this life (53-59). For our purposes, it will suffice to outline Thomas’s account of the wisdom of Christ’s doctrine, ordered by the cross, whence his word is both effective and exemplary.

Question 42 on Christ’s doctrine or teaching begins by reflecting on his preaching to Jews only and not to Gentiles. Christ rightly preached to the Jews “at first” for four reasons, suggests Thomas: (i) to “confirm” the fulfillment of the promises made to them (Rom 15.8); (ii) to show that he was from God, who promised to send to the Gentiles Jewish missionaries to “declare my glory among the nations” (Is 66.19), on which basis

\(^{498}\) 24, 3 c.  
\(^{499}\) 24, 4 c.  
\(^{500}\) 27 prologue.
Jesus starts with “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Mt 15.24; cf. Mt 10.5); (iii) to deprive the Jews of a “valid excuse,” as Jerome says; and (iv) because “Christ merited power and lordship over the Gentiles through the triumph of the cross,” according to Philippians 2.8-11: he “became obedient to the point of death... Therefore God exalted him..., so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow..., and every tongue confess” him. He thus sent his disciples to preach to the Gentiles, “teaching all nations” (Mt 28.19-20), after the passion; while just prior to his passion, he assured the Greeks who wished to see him that “unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit” (Jn 12.24).501

If Christ’s word is especially ordered by the cross, as St Paul insists, then this must be the form of his wisdom, as well. “We speak wisdom among the perfect” or mature, notes Paul as an encouragement to the beleaguered Corinthians (I Cor 2.6), who were precisely and only “saved” by “the word of the cross” (I Cor 1.18).502 To be sure, Christ did not in fact “manifest all the depths of his wisdom” to either the multitudes or the disciples, as he himself asserted just before his betrayal and arrest: “I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear (portare) them now” (Jn 16.12). “Yet he expounded openly and not in secret whatever things, in his wisdom, he judged it right to make known to others,” as he insisted under house arrest to the high priest: “I have spoken openly to the world” (Jn 18.20).503 While, for instance, “Christ spoke certain

501 42, 1 c. Cf. ad 1; 47, 4.

502 42, 3 obj 2; see 25, 4 ad 1 for an adjacent quotation of I Corinthians 1.18, and also 49, 6 sc, cited below. Cf. section II of chapter 2, above, and II-II 45, 4-5.

503 Ibid. ad 2. Cf. ibid. c and sc.
things in secret to the crowds, by employing parables in teaching them spiritual mysteries which they were either unable or unworthy to grasp, it was better for them to be instructed in the knowledge of spiritual things, albeit hidden under the garb of parables, than to be deprived of it altogether.” And our Lord “expounded the open and unveiled truth of these parables to his disciples, so that they might hand it down to others worthy of it,” according to II Timothy 2.2.504

In every case, Christ’s teaching aimed at a singular purpose: the spiritual transformation of his hearers, by word and deed. For this reason, Christ fittingly did not “commit his doctrine to writing,” argues Thomas, on three counts: (i) “as the most excellent of teachers,” Christ aimed to “imprint” his doctrine “on the hearts of his hearers;” (ii) because the excellence of his doctrine “could not be comprehended,” as Augustine says, even by many books (see Jn 21.25), nor could its depth be captured by merely written words; and (iii) because, in this way, Christ’s doctrine “might reach all in an orderly manner—he himself teaching his disciples, and they subsequently teaching others, by preaching and writing,” as in Proverbs 9.3, a favorite scriptural instance of the mode of sacred doctrine: Wisdom sends out her handmaidens, inviting the simple to the tower.505 Christ’s prediction was correct, therefore: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away” (Lk 21.33), since the disciples “put into writing what he showed forth and said to them,” observes Augustine. From this perspective, the bishop of Hippo continues, it is incorrect to say that Christ “wrote nothing, since his members

504 Ibid. c.

505 42, 4 c. On Proverbs 9.3, see again I 1, 5 sc; In I Cor 1.27, n. 66. Thomas does not cite the source of his quotation of Augustine.
put forth that which they knew under his dictation. At his command, they, being his hands, as it were, wrote whatever he wished us to read concerning his deeds and words."506 They wrote, however, to record "the law of the Spirit of life,” as Paul says (Rom 8.2), not so much “with ink” as “with the Spirit of the living God; not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of fleshly hearts” (II Cor 3.3).507

Thomas’s study of the passion of Christ in questions 46-49 consolidates the foregoing in terms of the exemplarity of the crucified Word. "These are the words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled,” says the risen Jesus to his disciples, immediately before ascending (Lk 24.44). And Luke continues: “Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them: ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ is to suffer and to rise again from the dead’” (24.45-46).508 Again, the principle may be applied to others as well: dying, a grain of wheat “brings forth much fruit” (Jn 12.24).509 On both counts (and on several others), Augustine reasonably taught that there was “no more suitable way of healing our misery” than by the passion of Christ.510 It shows us, for instance, the extent of God’s love, and stirs us “to love him in return,” wherein “lies the perfection of human salvation.”

506 Ibid. obj 1 and ad 1, quoting De consensu evang. 1.
507 Ibid. ad 2.
509 46, 2 obj 1.
510 46, 3 sc, quoting De trin. 13.
Likewise, in the passion God “set us an example of obedience, humility, constancy, justice, and the other virtues... which are requisite for human salvation, according to I Peter 2.21: ‘Christ also suffered for [you], leaving [you] an example, so that you should follow in his steps.’” Indeed, human beings are “all the more bound to refrain from sin” because of Christ’s passion, according to I Corinthians 6.20: “You were bought with a great price; glorify and bear (portate) God in your body.”  

In each case, God himself, as incarnated “wisdom,” gives us “an example in righteousness of living,” in Augustine’s phrase. Or, in the sacramental words of Hebrews: “Jesus suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people by his own blood. Let us then go to him outside the camp, bearing (portantes) his reproach” (13.12-13). To bear Christ in our bodies, including the reproach that he himself bore, is among the principal “things” that he asks of us, through the Spirit, who speaks “whatever he hears” and declares what is “to come” (Jn 16.12-13); things that follow upon and cleave to the same pattern of his own suffering, “in all the scriptures” (Lk 24.27). “The sacraments of faith” serve as the principal site of this suffering, where the efficacy of Christ’s passion may be secured “by spiritual contact”—“through faith in his blood” (Rom 3.25). “For we are buried with him by baptism into death” (Rom 6.4), and so

511 Ibid. c.
512 46, 4 c, quoting Question 25 of the 83 QQ.
513 46, 10 ad 2.
514 Recalling the scriptural quotations at 42, 3 ad 2 and 46, 1 c, above.
515 48, 6 ad 2. Cf. 49, 1 ad 4 and ad 5; 49, 3 ad 1 and ad 2; 49, 5 c and ad 3.
made “children of God” and “joint heirs with Christ—if in fact we suffer with him, so that we may also be glorified with him” (Rom 8.17).  

By staking out in the first, major section of the *tertia pars* a “grammar” of Incarnation: (i) the Word (ii) made flesh, Thomas has set the stage for the christological situation of sacraments as (i) words and (ii) things at III 60 and following, the latter in each case determined and perfected by the former.  

The prologue of the *tertia pars* features this very point by noting that theology is “consummated” by Christ as “savior of all,” whence “we must consider” both “the savior himself” and “the sacraments by which we attain to our salvation.” That Christ and the sacraments cannot be separated thus turns out to be a principal thesis of the *Summa*; albeit, the rudiments of the thesis already appeared at I 1, where the Dionysian commendation of “suffering divine things” served as an elaboration or gloss upon the earlier argument for “salvation” as the end—the purpose and point—of theology.  

“To those who are being saved, the word of the cross is the power of God” (I Cor 1.18).  

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516 49, 3 ad 2 and ad 3.  
518 I 1, 1 c and 6 ad 3.  
519 48, 6 sc.
CHAPTER 6:
WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD: ST III 60-72

“After considering those things that concern the mystery of the incarnate Word, we must consider the sacraments of the Church which derive their efficacy from the same Word incarnate.” So begins the prologue of question 60, Aquinas’s transition into the second major section of the tertia pars of the Summa and the penultimate section of the work as a whole.\(^{520}\) Having treated “the savior himself” in questions 1-59, he will, in question 60 and following, treat “the sacraments by which we attain to our salvation.”\(^{521}\)

Why does Aquinas think the sacraments “derive their efficacy” from the Word, and what does this mean? To answer, it is well to follow three stages of his discussion: on the sacraments in general (questions 60-65); on Baptism and Confirmation (questions 66-72); and on the Eucharist (questions 73-83). The present chapter will handle the first two of these in three parts. First, I will draw out the principal themes of question 60, which

\(^{520}\) Thomas was still laboring on this section of the tertia pars—he got through question 90 in the treatise on Penance—when he suddenly ceased work around 6 December 1273, after which his untimely death soon followed in early March 1274. Cf. Torrell, STA I, pp. 289-95. Thomas’s earlier treatment of the remaining sacraments, from book IV of his Commentary on the Sentences, now “supplements” most editions of the Summa, numbered as questions 1-68. Following these are questions 69-101, again reproduced from the Sentences commentary, in place of the last major section of the Summa, slated by Thomas to handle “the end of immortal life to which we attain by the resurrection” (III prologue).

\(^{521}\) III prologue.
establishes the essential, threefold pattern for all that follows, namely, that God effects the sacraments under the sign of the Word to the end of human sanctification. Second, I apply the pattern in a summary of questions 61-65 before, thirdly, demonstrating the systematic organization of questions 66-72 according to the same pattern. In conclusion, I offer an initial comparison of the sacramentology of Thomas’s *Scriptum* on the *Sententiae* of Peter Lombard with that of the *Summa*, noting the enhanced christological focus of the later work and its accompanying scripturalism, particularly Johannine and Corinthian in character.

I. Sacramental things and words: Signs of sanctity (Q. 60)

In question 60, given to defining *sacrament*, Aquinas presents a succinct introduction to his sacramental theology, which he develops in the following five questions: on the necessity of the sacraments (q. 61), grace and character as effects of the sacraments (qq. 62-63), causes of the sacraments (q. 64), and the number of sacraments (q. 65). His debt to St. Augustine is massive throughout. But especially in this first question, citing the Bishop of Hippo fourteen times, Thomas places Augustine’s semiology squarely in the service of the Christology to which the *tertia pars* is devoted. In doing so, Aquinas begins explicitly to reflect upon how *word* is a supple enough token of divine personality and human thought and communication to capture the reflected experience of Christian sacramental faith and life.522

522 “Token,” that is, in the sense of sign, expression, or linguistic analogy—indeed, the original analogy. See I 13, 5 c: “whatever is said of God and creatures is said according to the relation of a creature
Aquinas begins from the Augustinian supposition, adopted already by the Lombard, that sacraments are sensible signs of a peculiar sort. “The visible sacrifice is the sacrament, that is, the sacred sign of the invisible sacrifice,” wrote Augustine in *City of God,*⁵²³ for the sound scriptural reason offered by the psalmist, “the penitent in the prophet’s book,” who “seeks God’s forgiveness for his sins with these words: ‘If you had wished for sacrifice, I would certainly have given it: but you will not delight in holocausts. The sacrifice offered to God is a broken spirit; God will not despise a heart that is broken and humbled.’”⁵²⁴ The first thing to note about sacraments, therefore, is that they mark the sanctity or holiness of human persons under the sign of sacrifice. The point is in part grammatical (given the common root, *sacrum*, a holy thing⁵²⁵), and at that level fits neatly with Thomas’s decision to emphasize the communicative or signifying aspect to God as its principle and cause, wherein all perfections of things preexist excellently.” In the case of word, its perfection uniquely preexists in God because it is a personal name (I 34, 1). For “in God to be and to understand are one and the same: hence the Word of God is not an accident in him, or an effect of his, but belongs to his very nature” (I 34, 2 ad 1). At the same time, *Word* signifies “relation to creatures, inasmuch as God, by understanding himself, understands every creature” (I 34, 3 ad 4). On causality in Thomas’s Christology, placed within the context of analogical reasoning, see Philip L. Reynolds, “Philosophy as the Handmaid of Theology: Aquinas on Christ’s Causality,” *Contemplating Aquinas: On the Varieties of Interpretation*, ed. Fergus Kerr (London: SCM, 2003), pp. 243-45 and passim.

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⁵²³ 60, 1 sc, quoting *De civ. dei* 10. Cf. ST III 22, 2 c for an earlier quotation of this text (discussed in the previous chapter), where Thomas also quotes Psalm 51.17, following the example of the bishop of Hippo (see the following note).


⁵²⁵ See 60, 1 ad 1: “sanctitas, a qua denominatur sacramentum.” Cf. III 73, 1 ad 3: “sacramentum dicitur ex eo quod continet aliquid sacrum” and 4 obj 2: “In omnibus etiam sacramentis fit aliquid sacrum, quod pertinet ad rationem sacrificii.”
of the sacraments, that they need not “always imply causality.” In Augustine’s most
general formulation in De doctrina christiana (hereafter DDC): “a sign is that which
conveys something else to the mind besides the species which it impresses on the
senses,” a text that reflects, as R. A. Markus has argued, the “triadic nature of the
relation of ‘signifying,’” namely, “the object or significatum for which the sign stands,
the sign itself, and the subject to whom the sign stands for the object signified.” At the
same time, secondly, sacraments effect holiness, whence Thomas is careful to say that
they are only “a kind of sign” (in genere signi): because, as the Lombard also taught, a
sacrament “is a sign of the grace of God and the form of invisible grace, in such a way as
to carry its image and to be its cause. Therefore, the sacraments were instituted not only
for the sake of signifying grace, but also of sanctifying.”

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526 Ibid. See more fully 60, 1 c: “Sic igitur sacramentum potest aliquid dici... quia habet aliquem
ordinem ad hanc sanctitatem, vel causae vel signi vel secundum quamcunque aliam habitudinem.
Specialiter autem nunc loquimur de sacramentis secundum quod important habitudinem signi. Et secundum
hoc sacramentum ponitur in genere signi.” Cf. Liam G. Walsh, “Sacraments,” in The Theology of Thomas

527 60, 1 obj 2 and 60, 4 ad 1: “praeter speciem quam ingerit sensibus, facit aliquid aliud in
cognitionem venire,” quoting DDC II 1.1: “Signum est enim res praeter speciem, quam ingerit sensibus,
aliud aliquid ex se faciens in cogitationem uenire” (ET: Teaching Christianity [hereafter TC], trans.

528 Markus, “Augustine on Signs” (1957), repr. in Signs and Meanings: World and Text in Ancient
Christianity (Liverpool: L U P, 1996), pp. 86-93; here, p. 87. Markus paraphrases Augustine—in terms of
object and subject—in what Markus takes to be the substantially identical terminology of Peirce.

529 Sententiae IV d. 1, c. 4, n. 2: “Sacramentum enim proprie dicitur quod ita signum est gratiae
Dei et invisibilis gratiae forma, ut ipsius imaginem gerat et causa exsistat. Non igitur significandi tantum
gratia sacramenta instituta sunt, sed et sanctificandi” (ET: Philipp W. Rosemann, Peter Lombard [Oxford:
Somme théologique,” Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et théologiques 31 (1947), pp. 214-28; Walsh,
“Sacraments,” p. 333.
Articles 2 and 3 of question 60 spell out more precisely sacramental signification as a cause of human holiness. Where article 1 spoke only of God, Thomas now explains that sacraments sanctify by virtue of Christ. In a useful review of his teaching about the old law, Thomas writes in an objection that whatever was done under the old law was a figure of Christ who is the “holy of holies” (Dan 9.24), according to 1 Corinthians 10.11: “All these things happened to them in figure,” and Colossians 2.17: “Which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is Christ’s.” And yet not all that was done by the fathers of the Old Testament, not even all the ceremonies of the Law, were sacraments, but only in certain special cases.

For some sacred things in the Old Testament signified “the holiness of Christ considered as holy in himself.” Others, however, “signified his holiness considered as the cause of our holiness,” and it is these that “properly speaking” are called sacraments, in the old and new law alike, because by them “we are made holy” by Christ—both disposed to holiness and perfected in it. This occurs through Christ’s passion, which the sacraments recall for us as they effect “the form of our sanctification, which is grace and

530 See Walsh, “Sacraments,” pp. 334-35. Walsh rightly notes that once Aquinas has, at 60, 1 c, “chosen to think about sacraments as ‘signs of a sacred reality sanctifying humans,’ he is thereby thinking about them as causes: they are the reality of Christ, the one who sanctifies, in the form of sign” (p. 335)—who is himself the efficient, formal, and final cause of human holiness. We need not wait till question 62, therefore—on grace in the sacraments—to note the place of causality in Thomas’s picture, observes Walsh. Cf. ibid., pp. 344-49; and Mark D. Jordan, Rewritten Theology: Aquinas after His Readers (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 163-68.


532 60, 2 ad 2.

533 60, 2 ad 2 and c. See 60, 2 ad 3: “ideo ea quae significant dispositionem ad sanctitatem, non dicuntur sacramenta, de quibus procedit obieictio; sed solum ea quae significant perfectionem sanctitatis humanae.” Cf. 60, 3 c.
the virtues.”  

For “there is only one cause of human holiness, namely, the blood of Christ, according to Hebrews 13.12: ‘Jesus, that he might sanctify the people by his own blood, suffered without the gate.’” Thus sacraments signify, at once, Jesus Christ and human sanctity, the latter “implied in the sanctifying cause as such.”

Having explained in the first three articles the larger point of sacramental signification: the making holy of human beings by Christ, Thomas explains in the remaining articles the mechanics, so to speak, of sacramental signifying. As Augustine taught in DDC, there are two kinds of signs in a sacrament, things and words. “The word is added to the element and this becomes a sacrament,” wrote the bishop of Hippo, and Thomas clarifies: “he is speaking there of water which is a sensible element.” Of course, every sign is also a thing, because otherwise it would be nothing. And some, but not all, things may also be signs, like the piece of wood that Moses threw into the bitter water to remove its bitterness, or the animal that Abraham sacrificed instead of his son. Augustine’s point, however, taken over by Thomas, is that the word follows on

534 60, 3 c. Cf. Sententiae IV d. 2, c. 1, n. 2: “ante adventum Christi, qui gratiam attulit, gratiae sacramenta non fuisse danda, quae ex ipsius morte et passione virtutem sortita sunt,” noted in Rosemann, Peter Lombard, p. 144.

535 60, 3 obj 2.

536 60, 3 ad 2. See further on this matter esp. 61, 4 and 62, 5, discussed below. Cf. In I Cor 1.13 (“Was Paul crucified for you?”), nn. 31-32, for an argument from not only Hebrews 13.12 (as in 60, 3), but also from Rom 6.3, Jn 11.50, II Cor 5.14, Col 1.24, I Pet 2.21, and II Cor 1.6.

537 60, 4 sc: “Sed contra est quod Augustinus dicit, Super Ioan. [Tract 80]: accedit verbum ad elementum, et fit sacramentum. Et loquitur ibi de elemento sensibili, quod est aqua.” Thomas cites this text of Augustine frequently in the tertia pars, including at 60, 6 sc; 66, 1 obj 3; 72, 3 obj 2; 78, 5 c. Cf. IV Sent. d. 1, q. 1, a. 1, qla 5 ad 2; In I Cor 11.24, n. 667; and Lombard, Sententiae IV d. 3, c. 1, n. 2.

538 DDC I 2.2: “Quam ob rem omne signum etiam res aliqua est; quod enim nulla res est, omnino nihil est” (TC, p. 107).

539 Ibid. (TC, pp. 106-07).
and interprets the sensible element for a basic, anthropological reason. In the first place, human beings learn by means of their senses; and since the “divine wisdom provides for each thing according to its mode,” God “sets spiritual things before us under the guise of sensible things.” In the second place, human understanding depends upon a linguistic process of intellection, that is, a conventional or given system of signs—Augustine’s *signa data*—called words; whence, as Thomas puts it, “intelligible effects do not partake of the nature of a sign except insofar as they are pointed out by certain signs.” Accordingly, it makes sense for him to treat sacraments as sensible signs or things (articles 4-5) before coming to sacraments as intelligible signs or words (articles 6-8), just as Augustine proposed to discuss things in the first book of DDC before coming to signs in books II-III.

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540 60, 4 c: “divina sapientia unicuique rei providet secundum suum modum, et propter hoc dicitur, Wis 8, quod suaviter disponit omnia,” recalling similar texts from throughout the *Summa*. See, e.g., I 1, 6 and I 43, 5 ad 2 on the Son as the Word of God, who is perceived by “a certain experimental knowledge... called wisdom, as it were a sweet knowledge, according to Sirach 6.23: *The wisdom of doctrine is according to her name.*” Cf. in this light III 12, 3 ad 2. The quotation of Wisdom at III 60, 4 c also anticipates, e.g., III 73, 6 c, the end of Thomas’s first question on the Eucharist, where the chief figure of the *effect of the Eucharist (res tantum)* is identified as the Manna, “having in it the sweetness of every taste (*Wis 16.20*), just as the grace of this sacrament refreshes the soul in all respects.”

541 *Ibid.* Cf. 60, 5 ad 1: God “signifies spiritual things to us by means of the sensible things in the sacraments, and by the verbal similitudes of Scripture,” a statement that recalls I, 1, 9. Cf. III 12, 3 ad 2, where Thomas uncharacteristically speaks of human learning by “sensible words, which are signs of intelligible concepts.”

542 DDC II 3.4, cited at 60, 6 c: see note 562, below.

543 60, 4 ad 1.

544 See DDC I 2.2: “prius de rebus, postea de signis disseremus” (*TC*, p. 107). Cf. *ibid.* I 1.1; III 56. It should be noted that Augustine relativizes the division between *res* and *signa* by introducing a further distinction between things to be enjoyed (*frui*) and used (*uti*), the only instance of the former being God the Trinity (DDC I 3.3 and 5.5).
The two saints have another, theological reason for ordering their works in this way. In Augustine’s case, Markus observes that Augustine particularly emphasizes in DDC the third term in the triad of signifying, the fact of interpretation by the subject. Augustine also emphasizes, however, the importance of the intention of the “sign-maker,” as Markus puts it. The bishop suggests, for instance, that we have no “purpose in signifying, that is in giving a sign, other than to bring out and transfer to someone else’s mind what we, the givers of the sign, have in mind ourselves.” With this point in view, Mark Jordan finds that “the semantic relation of sign to thing is imbedded in an expressive relation of speaker to hearer” in DDC, where Markus contrasts the interpretive focus of the work with *De trinitate*’s focus on the speaker or thinker as expressive. At stake in the difference is Jordan’s recognition of the “task” of DDC as the construction of “fundamental analogies between signification and Incarnation,” a theological insight that corrects the charge of Markus that Augustine is “astonishingly blind to the extent that communities are created by the language they speak quite as much

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545 Markus, “Augustine on Signs,” p. 87.

546 Ibid., p. 89.

547 DDC II 2.3: “Nec ulla causa est nobis significandi, id est signi dandi, nisi ad depromendum et traiciendum in alterius animum id quod animo gerit, qui signum dat” (TC, p. 129).


as they create it.” Markus’s socio-linguistic observation is correct. His less theological reading of DDC, however, leads him not to notice Augustine’s constant presumption that the Christian community only speaks (as it reads and hears) after the Word of God, who is not only the original sign but the effective precedent for all subsequent communal expression as its cause or creator, in Markus’s term. Thus the incarnate Word appears in DDC I as the persistent point of contact between things and words; the Word, as Augustine says, who was “not changed in the least, and yet became flesh, in order to dwell among us” as God’s Wisdom, at once “our home” and “the way home.”

551 Markus, “Augustine on Signs,” p. 93.

552 Turning in the final section of his essay to De trinitate, Markus similarly argues on philosophico-linguistic grounds against the explanatory usefulness of Augustine’s analogy between the Incarnation and the human movement from thought (inner word) to expression (spoken word) (“Augustine on Signs,” p. 95ff.), without engaging the theological claim on its own terms. Cf. Markus’s subsequent essay, “Signs, Communication, and Communities in Augustine’s De doctrina christiana,” in De doctrina christiana: A Classic of Western Culture, ed. Duane W. H. Arnold and Pamela Bright (Notre Dame: UNDP, 1995), which repeats the substance of the earlier argument without correcting for Christology (notwithstanding the adduction of DDC II 19.29 at p. 104: “that there are two kinds of teaching,” one instituted by human beings and the other established by God).

553 DDC I 13: “non commutatum caro tamen factum est, ut habitaret in nobis,” and I 11.11: “Cum ergo ipsa sit patria, viam se quoque nobis fecit ad patriam” (TC, p. 111). Augustine set a precedent here for the “via est nobis tendendi in Deum” of ST I 2 prologue; and the whole of the first question of the Summa may be read as a systematization of Augustine on the theme of divine pedagogy intrinsic to revelation and the Incarnation. Cf. Joseph Wawrykow, “Reflections on the Place of the De doctrina christiana in High Scholastic Discussions of Theology,” Reading and Wisdom: The De Doctrina Christiana of Augustine in the Middle Ages, ed. Edward D. English (Notre Dame: UNDP, 1995), pp. 100-09, esp. p. 102. In Christ the Word, our sapientia has become our scientia. I emphasize the Word as the cause of Christian speech more thoroughly than Jordan, who occasionally refers to the Word as the “exemplary cause” of human signification but nothing more (“Words and Word,” p. 178). In this way my argument amplifies his interest in the normative context of “the community of readers which is the Church,” in which, as he says, the Scriptures “reflect the Incarnation” (“Words and Word,” p. 178). To be fair to Markus, he helpfully notes at the end of his essay that Augustine’s primary interest—in De Magistro, in DDC, and in De trinitate—was a “vision of the truth known to him as being imparted to him by God, speaking through his Scriptures or his creatures from without, and through his own mind from within.... He is much more concerned [in the earlier works] with the Interior Teacher dwelling in the mind and teaching within, than with the external signs which he deciphers for us; and he is much more interested in his identity with the Word ‘whose participation is our illumination, the Word who is the life which is the light of men’ (De trin. IV 2, 4), than he is in the difference between the signs and words interpreted by the one and the ‘words’ begotten in the light of the other” (“Augustine on Signs,” p. 101). These remarks also corroborate, however, the extent to
Thomas appropriates the Augustinian Word to the center of the *Summa*’s sacramental theology, a decision that ties the earlier parts of the work to this practical end point.554

Article 6 of question 60 is the entryway. The *sed contra* of the previous article already quoted Jesus from John’s gospel: “Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (Jn 3.5).555 Now, however, Thomas quotes for the first of many times Ephesians 5.25-26: “Christ loved the Church, and delivered himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life.”556 The latter text significantly speaks of Christ himself cleansing the which Markus’s foregoing, critical engagement bracketed the christological aspect of Augustine’s theory of language, a decision that renders suspect Markus’’s registering of various disagreements along the way as intra-philosophical without remainder. Cf. for an improvement on this score John C. Cavadini, “The Sweetness of the Word: Salvation and Rhetoric in Augustine’s *De doctrina christiana,*” *De doctrina christiana: A Classic of Western Culture,* eds. Duane W. H. Arnold and Pamela Bright (Notre Dame: UNDP, 1995), esp. p. 169: “the saving eloquence of God—Christ—is presented [in DDC] not only as the way of our ascent but as the goal as well. Interpreting John 14.6, ‘I am the Way and the Truth and the Life,’ Augustine notes that the Word made flesh means to say, ‘you are to come through me, to arrive at me, and to remain in me,’ because arriving at Christ, we arrive also at the Father (Jn 14.10).” Thus Augustine sees the humanity of Christ as “speech,” and it is “only in the speech [that] we see the meaning; we do not depart from the realm of speech, from the realm of the temporal” (emphasis in original). Helpful along a similar line is Mario Naldini, “Structure and Pastoral Theology of *Teaching Christianity,*” an introductory essay in Saint Augustine, *Teaching Christianity (= De doctrina christiana),* trans. Edmund Hill (New York: New City Press, 1996), esp. at p. 15, exegeting DDC I 11, 11 to I 13.

554 Augustine did not explicate the sacraments as words in DDC (where he in fact contrasts words as spoken and heard with the Eucharist which is tasted: see II 3.4). See, however, *Contra Faustum Manicheum* 19.16 and *In Johannis evangelium tractatus* 15.4 and 80.3, all of which texts Thomas cites repeatedly in the *Summa* (see above). See Emmanuel J. Cutrone, “Sacraments,” in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia,* gen. ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), esp. p. 744. On the extent to which Thomas’s overall sacramental procedure in the ST is, at once, heavily influenced by and distinct from Augustine, see Mauro Turrini, *L’anthropologie sacramentelle de St Thomas d’Aquin dans Summa théol. III QQ 60-65* (Paris: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2001), pp. 140-66 (discussed below).

555 60, 5 sc.

556 60, 6 sc: “Sed contra est quod apostolus dicit, Eph 5: Christus dilexit Ecclesiam, et tradidit semetipsum pro ea, ut illam sanctificaret, mundans eam lavacro aquae in verbo vitae.”
Church by Baptism in the word, a word, Thomas suggests, that may be considered in three ways: in terms of the cause of sanctification, the person who is sanctified, and the sacramental signification itself.\textsuperscript{557}

First, sacramental words “can be considered in regard to the cause of sanctification which is the Word incarnate: to whom a sacrament has a certain conformity in that the word is joined to the sensible thing, just as in the mystery of the Incarnation the Word of God is united to sensible flesh.”\textsuperscript{558} Several things should be said about this interesting sentence. Thomas has provided a gloss on 60, 3 c which spoke of “Christ’s passion” as “the very cause of our sanctification.” To say now that “the Word incarnate” is the cause hearkens back to 60 prologue, which stated that “the sacraments of the Church ... derive their efficacy from the Word incarnate himself.” This last claim neatly builds on the teaching in the first section of the tertia pars that the person of the Word is the subject of Christology. In what sense, however, can Christ’s passion and the Word’s incarnation alike be causes of the sacraments? The final clause of the sentence just quoted from 60, 6 c provides a clue: in the event of Incarnation, the Word took to himself a

\textsuperscript{557} 60, 6 c: “sacramenta, sicut dictum est, adhibentur ad hominum sanctificationem sicut quaedam signa. Tripliciter ergo considerari possunt, et quolibet modo congruit eis quod verba rebus sensibilibus adiungantur.” Cf. Walsh, “Sacraments,” pp. 337-38. This threefold scheme distinguishes the principal actors and the means in the sacraments, and so does not strictly correspond to the three aspects or stages of human sanctification via the sacraments mentioned at 60, 3 c (derived from the Aristotelian causes), though the two analyses overlap in several respects. Thomas’s commentary on Ephesians 5.25 (\textit{In Eph 5.25}, n. 323) is not especially interesting in and of itself, though in light of the \textit{Summa} one can make out the essential parts of Thomas’s mature position, discussed below: (i) one is cleansed in Baptism by the passion of Christ (ii) \textit{in the word of life}, which “gives [the water] the power to cleanse,” according to the formula given at Matthew 28.19. On the importance and originality of Thomas’s procedure at III 60, 6-8, see Turrini, \textit{L’anthropologie sacramentelle}, pp. 329-37.

\textsuperscript{558} 60, 6 c: “Primo enim possunt considerari ex parte causae sanctificantis, quae est verbum incarnatum, cui sacramentum quodammodo conformatur in hoc quod rei sensibili verbum adhibetur, sicut in mysterio incarnationis carnis sensibiles est verbum Dei unitum.”
human nature, both soul and body. Thus Christ’s “sensible flesh”—incorporating all that he subsequently suffered, including the passion—is sacramentally signified by the sensible sign or thing, while the person of the Word is signified by the intelligible sign or word. In this way, the requisite things and words in the sacraments signify the *experience* of sanctification as “a certain conformity,” as Thomas says, to (i) the passion (ii) of the Word.\(^{559}\) That is, the making holy of human beings proceeds both sensibly and verbally for a basic christological reason, sacramentally caused by and conformed to the Word incarnate.

The second and third aspects of sacramental utterance enumerated by Thomas in 60, 6 c—the person sanctified and the signification itself—further articulate the priority, or assimilative power, of words with respect to sensible signs. In terms of the second aspect, because human beings are composed of soul and body, the visible thing in sacraments “touches the body,” while the word “is believed by the soul.” But, in Augustine’s rhetorical question on John 15.3 (“Now you are clean by reason of the word”): “Whence has water such power as this, to touch the body and cleanse the heart, except by the word doing it—not because it is spoken, but because it is believed?”\(^{560}\) Augustine thus credits the word as believed in the heart (in accordance with its *sense*\(^ {561}\))

\(^{559}\) As concluded in light of 60, 3, and especially 60, 3 ad 2: “Since a sacrament signifies that which sanctifies, it must needs signify the effect, which is implied in the sanctifying cause as such.”

\(^{560}\) 60, 6 c, quoting Tract 80 on John. Thomas cites this text of Augustine again at 60, 7 ad 1 and at 62, 4 sc.

\(^{561}\) 60, 7 ad 1. Thomas continues, “this sense is indeed the same for all, though the same words as to their sound be not used by all. Consequently no matter in what language this sense is expressed, the sacrament is complete.” See further along this line 60, 8 c, where Thomas teaches that there is “a due (*debitus*) sense of the words” in every “substantial part of the sacramental form.” For interesting reflections on sense in sacramental words with reference to pronunciation, see 60, 7 ad 3.
with the sacrament’s power to cleanse. Likewise, in terms of the sacramental sign:

Augustine taught in DDC that “words are the principal signs used by human beings” to “signify various mental concepts;” they “express our thoughts with greater distinctness.” Therefore, continues Thomas,

in order to insure the perfection of sacramental signification it was necessary to determine the signification of the sensible things by means of certain words. For water may signify both a cleansing by reason of its humidity, and refreshment by reason of its being cool: but when we say, “I baptize you,” it is clear that we use water in Baptism in order to signify a spiritual cleansing.

Thus, again, the sacramental word “determines” the sensible sign by interpreting it.

The point may also be seen in terms of Augustine’s “visible words,” said of the corporeal sacraments. If the sensible things in sacraments are themselves words in some sense, is it not superfluous to add more words? No, because the sensible elements of the sacraments are called words by way of a certain likeness, insofar as they partake of a certain significative power which resides principally in the very words, as stated above. Consequently it is not a superfluous repetition to add words to the visible element in the sacraments because one determines the other.

Thomas thus strengthens his earlier teaching by adding that spoken words are the “principal power” of signification. For this reason words signify “more perfectly” than

562 60, 6 c: “Dicit autem Augustinus, in DDC II, quod verba inter homines obtinuerunt principatwn significandi, quia verba diversimode formari possunt ad significandos diversos conceptus mentis, et propter hoc per verba magis distincte possimus exprimere quod mente concipimus.”

563 60, 6 c.

564 60, 6 obj 1, quoting Contra Faustum 19.

565 60, 6 ad 1.
sensible things: because “the signification of things is completed (\textit{perficitur}) by means of words.”\textsuperscript{566}

Perhaps most important for the larger form of Aquinas’s argument, the Christian person and the sacramental signifier alike depend upon the prior, effective utterance or signification of the Word of God.\textsuperscript{567} In terms of the person, the word in the human heart could only have the power to cleanse on account of its concomitant conformity to the Word incarnate as the cause of sanctification. In terms of the sign, Thomas returns to the notion of \textit{perfection}, already broached in articles 2-3. There he explained that sacraments are properly so called “in reference to their end and state of completeness,” that they in fact “signify the perfection of human holiness” which is “eternal life.”\textsuperscript{568} At the same time, because a sacrament can be a sign of more than one thing, sacraments signify “that perfection which consists in the form” of sanctification, namely, grace and the virtues.\textsuperscript{569} Either way, it is important, according to article 3, to trace the sacramental cause to Christ’s passion. Now, in article 6, Thomas adds that the sacramental words themselves perfectly “signify spiritual cleansing”—bespeaking a cleansing that actually obtains—because of the Word’s causal action to this end.

Aquinas’s teaching about the assimilative or determinative priority of words with respect to things also joins his picture of the movement from Word to faith to sacramental

\textsuperscript{566} 60, 6 ad 2.

\textsuperscript{567} The English Dominican and Blackfriars translations both render “dicere proferre verbum” as “utter”; e.g., at I 34, 1 ad 3 (cf. also I 34, 2 obj 2 and ad 2 on the Valentinian misconstrual of \textit{prolatio} applied to the Word). See also I 34 for the Word of God as both \textit{significatum} or object and sign.

\textsuperscript{568} 60, 2 ad 3 and 60, 3 obj 3.

\textsuperscript{569} 60, 3 ad 3 as a gloss on 60, 3 c.
signification (sensible and verbal) in terms of the *form* of the sacraments. For “in the sacraments, words and things, like form and matter, combine in the formation of one thing.”570 But “the determining principle is on the part of the form, which is as it were the end and terminus of the matter. Consequently, for the being of a thing the need of a determinate form is prior to the need of determinate matter.”571 Thus the sacraments “flow from Christ himself, with a certain likeness to him,”572 and at his express command, wherein their form originates. That is,

> our Lord used determinate words in consecrating the sacrament of the Eucharist, when he said: “This is my body” (Mt 26.26). Likewise he commanded his disciples to baptize under a form of determinate words, saying: “Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Mt 28.19).573

Words, after all, “can be *formed* in various ways for various purposes,” but “the sacraments have a certain *conformity* to the Word incarnate,” as Thomas said in 60, 6 c.574 And again, in 60, 3 c: “grace and the virtues,” which “are signified by the sacraments” and so “form... our sanctification,” depend, in their practical outworking, on the wholly effective passion of Christ.575

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570 60, 6 ad 2.
571 60, 7 c.
572 60, 6 ad 3.
573 60, 7 sc.
574 60, 6 c: “verba diversimode formari possunt ad significandos diversos conceptus mentis,” and “verbum incarnatum, cui sacramentum quodammodo conformatur.”
575 60, 3 c.
To summarize, the sacramental “word of life” (Eph 5.26) with which Thomas began functions neither univocally nor equivocally but analogically, as the Word of God, the word of faith, and the sacramental signifier are distinguishable and yet fundamentally related. The relation may be characterized as one of compounding signification, as each obtains in every sacramental instance. Thus, rather than alternating from one instance to another, the various words are layered: effecting, understanding, and enunciating (respectively) the necessary aspects of human sanctification. Moreover, they are causally or hierarchically arranged: beginning with the Word of God, and proceeding to the capability of human reason in general and the relevant instance of the latter in the case of verbal signification in the sacraments.576

Of course, the sacramental Word and words are in every case borne by Scripture.577 So it is fitting, finally, to assimilate the foregoing to a point that Thomas underlines in the last article of question 60. As the objection reasons: “It seems that it is not lawful to add anything to the words in which the sacramental form consists. For these sacramental words are not of less importance than are the words of sacred Scripture. But it is not lawful to add anything to, or to take anything from, the words of Scripture,”

576 Here again I appropriate to another context Mark Jordan’s extensive research into discursive hierarchies in Aquinas’s writings, especially in Ordering Wisdom: The Hierarchy of Philosophical Discourses in Aquinas (Notre Dame: UNDP, 1986).
577 See again, e.g., 60, 4-6: all sacramental signification finds its warrant, if not always its letter, in Scripture; which is therefore the warrant for various extra-scriptural aspects, “both words and actions, which we employ in the sacraments,” as Thomas puts it several questions later (64, 2 obj 1). The reply notes that, while not all that is essential to the sacraments was “handed down by the Scriptures, yet the Church holds them from the intimate tradition of the apostles, according to the saying of Paul: The rest I will set in order when I come (I Cor 11.34)” (64, 2 ad 1). That said, just as the apostles and their successors “may not institute another Church, so neither may they deliver another faith, nor institute other sacraments: on the contrary, the Church is said to be built up with the sacraments which flowed from the side of Christ while hanging on the cross” (64, 2 ad 3, source not cited; but see Jn 19.34 and III 62, 5 sc, where the same text is cited from the gloss).
according to Deuteronomy 4.2 and also Revelation 22.18-19.578 In reply, Thomas allows that it “is not lawful to add anything to the words of sacred Scripture as regards the sense, but many words are added by doctors by way of exposition of sacred Scripture.”579 The response is significant, first, because the opening gambit of the objection is left untouched: that sacramental words are no less important than scriptural words, recalling the likening of Scripture and sacraments as acts of divine signification in articles 4-5.580 Second, Thomas effectively recapitulates the end of the first question of the *Summa* by marking the place of theological reflection as the exposition of Scripture. Third, therefore, Thomas reminds the reader, given the referral of sacramental signification to the Word of God, that Scripture is the primary site of the Word’s speech; that is, Scripture occupies a place of honor in the hierarchy of signification as the most important precedent of revelation.

II. The passional character of sacraments, in and after Christ the Word (QQ. 61-65)

The next five questions on “sacraments in general” reinforce the fact that sacraments betoken a sapiential curriculum of imitating Christ that properly finds its terminus *a quo* and *ad quem* in the Word, spoken and enacted. For the sacraments have a

578 60, 8 obj 1. Cf. *Scriptum* IV d. 3, a. 2, q1a 3 arg 1 for a nearly identical objection.

579 60, 8 ad 1. Of course, as he continues, “it is not lawful to add even words to sacred Scripture as though such words were a part thereof, for this would amount to forgery. It would amount to the same if anyone were to pretend that something is essential to a sacramental form, which is not so.”

580 I do not disagree with Walsh’s observation that sacramental words “are not as untouchable as the words of Scripture” in Thomas’s view (“Sacraments,” p. 342); I rather emphasize a different point. Cf. the discussion of III 72, 4 obj 1, below.
particular, sacrificial character, conjoined to and inseparable from their utterance, that
draws those who share them into an experience of the passion of Christ the Word, hence
into a formation after his likeness. In this way, the singular revelation of trinitarian self-
expression—“He spoke and they were made” (Ps. 32.9); “Bearing all things by the word
of his power” (Heb 1.3)\textsuperscript{581}—is borne and suffered by the would-be imitators of the Word
made flesh and crucified.

1. Again, sacraments consist in several elements—words and things—because
they function analogously to, and consequent upon, the Incarnation.\textsuperscript{582} For the person of
the Word, “as ‘he was in the beginning with God,’ quickens souls as principal agent; but
his flesh, and the mysteries accomplished therein, are as instrumental causes in the
process of giving life to the soul.”\textsuperscript{583} Of course, whereas Christ’s humanity is united or
“conjoined” instrumentally to God as “the principal efficient cause of grace,” the
sacraments are employed as a “separate instrument.” In both cases, however, there is a
causal hierarchy, according to which Christ as God effects the power of the sacrament.\textsuperscript{584}
Accordingly, the peculiar, sensible pedagogy of the sacraments is dependent upon the

\textsuperscript{581} 63, 1-3. Cf. I 34, 3 c and 34, 2 obj 5 and ad 5.
\textsuperscript{582} 61, 4 obj 2; cf. 62, 4 ad 4 and 64, 1.
\textsuperscript{583} 62, 5 ad 1. Thomas here repeats from the objection Augustine’s quotation of John. Cf. on this
\textsuperscript{584} 62, 5 c. Cf. Schillebeeckx, \textit{L’économie sacramentelle du salut}, p. 20. See further on causality in
the sacraments question 64, particularly articles 1 and 3.
means of verbal signification which bespeak a conformation to God’s own utterance in Christ.\footnote{585}

Likewise, human bodies are moved by “an instrumental spiritual power”—for instance, a voice, carrying with it a “mental concept” that “arouses the mind of the hearer”—analogous to the “spiritual power [in the sacraments], ... inasmuch as they are ordained by God to produce a spiritual effect”\footnote{586} via Christ’s own word. For a sacrament receives spiritual power from Christ’s blessing and from the action of the minister in applying it to a sacramental use. Hence Augustine says in a sermon on the Epiphany (St. Maximus of Turin, Serm. 12): “Nor should you marvel, if we say that water, a corporeal substance, achieves the cleansing of the soul. It does indeed, and penetrates every secret hiding-place of the conscience. For subtle and clear as it is, the blessing of Christ makes it yet more subtle, so that it permeates into the very principles of life and searches the inner-most recesses of the heart.”\footnote{587}

2. As in 60, 6, therefore, the prior action of the Word causes and enacts the passional matrix of the sacraments: “by his passion he inaugurated the rites of the Christian religion by offering ‘himself, an oblation and a sacrifice to God’ (Eph 5.2),”\footnote{588} through which the faithful are conformed to Christ. As Dionysius taught, both the old and the new law are prior to glory, “in which all truth will be openly and perfectly revealed,” and “there will be no sacraments.” Now, when we know “through a glass in a dark

\footnote{585} 61, 1 ad 1: sacraments provide “not merely” a bodily exercise, “but to a certain extent spiritual” exercise, in terms of “signification and causality;” 64, 2 ad 1: the sacraments were “instituted by Christ himself, who is God and man;” 64, 3 c: “Christ produces the inward sacramental effect both as God and as man, but not in the same way.” For the whole preceding paragraph, see Walsh, “Sacraments,” pp. 347-48.

\footnote{586} 62, 4 ad 1.

\footnote{587} 62, 4 ad 3. Cf. 64, 5 ad 1.

\footnote{588} 62, 5 c. Cf. the use of Ephesians 5.32 at 61, 2: matrimony in Genesis “foreshadowed something in relation to Christ and the Church: just as everything else foreshadowed Christ” (ad 3).
manner” (I Cor 13.12), “we need sensible signs in order to reach spiritual things.”\(^{589}\)

Thus, like “the ancient Fathers,” we are bound by faith to Christ’s birth and passion, albeit they looked forward and we look back. As Augustine wrote, “the same thing is variously pronounced as to be done and as having been done: for instance, the word *passurus*—going to suffer—differs from *passus*—having suffered.”\(^{590}\)

3. Putting (1) and (2) together, Aquinas effectively has completed the argument of I 1, 6 ad 3, on several counts. First, in “sensible” terms, he has articulated the sacramental means of the Dionysian *patiens divina*; that is, the sacraments are the proper locus for “suffering divine things” because they are animated by a passional core. For instance, the power of Christ’s passion “is in a manner united to us” because the mysteries accomplished in the flesh of the Word are “exemplars.”\(^{591}\)

Thus, as Aquinas argued earlier, it is necessary for those who are raised up after Christ to be likened to his resurrection, according to Philippians 3.21: “He will reform the body of our lowness, made like to the body of his glory.” For Christ’s resurrection is exemplary for “the just, who are made conformable with his sonship” (Rom 8.29).\(^{592}\)

Second, he has explicated the verbal means that effect, as an arrangement of compounding causes, the Christian’s conformity to Christ in the sacraments. Because the

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\(^{589}\) 61, 4 ad 1, citing *Eccles. Hier.* 5.

\(^{590}\) 61, 4 c, quoting *Contra Faust.* 19.

\(^{591}\) 62, 5 c: “sacramenta Ecclesiae specialiter habent virtutem ex passione Christi, cuius virtus quodammodo nobis copulatur per susceptionem sacramentorum” and 62, 5 ad 1: “verbum prout erat in principio apud Deum, vivificat animas sicut agens principale, caro tamen eius, et mysteria in ea perpetrata, operantur instrumentaliter ad animae vitam. Ad vitam autem corporis non solum instrumentaliter, sed etiam per quandam exemplaritatem.”

\(^{592}\) 56, 1 ad 3.
sacraments always originate in the action of the Word, the pattern of causality strictly depends upon the layers of speech—by Christ, in Scripture, by the minister, and by the faithful—that mount in every sacramental celebration as so many repetitions and imitations of the effective, first Word. Thus, a wicked priest ought not, as Dionysius says, “take part in divine things,” daring “to utter, in the person of Christ, words... over the divine symbols.” Likewise, in a favorite quotation of Augustine: “Whence has water such power as this, to touch the body and cleanse the heart?” Because “the Word of God... is believed.” Faith, then, after the Word, scripturally mediated—according to Eph 3.17: “That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith”—bears Christians to the “propitiation” (Rom 3.25) of Christ’s passion in the sacraments.

With this background, one may understand 64, 3 c, where Thomas notes that Christ as man has power of ministry and excellence in the sacraments in four ways, “just as Christ as God has power of authority” over them:

First in this, that the merit and power of his passion operates in the sacraments, as stated above. And because the power of the passion is communicated to us by faith, according to Romans 3.25: “Whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation through faith in his blood,” which faith we proclaim by calling on the name of Christ: therefore, secondly, Christ’s power of excellence over the sacraments consists in this, that they are sanctified by the invocation of his name. And

593 64, 6 sc, quoting Eccles. Hier. 1 and the Epistle ad Demophilum at length. Cf. the citation of I Cor 9.16 at obj 3: “For a necessity lays upon me: Woe unto me if I do not preach the gospel” with reference to the “bounden duty” of a priest to celebrate the sacraments, equating Paul’s preaching of the gospel with celebrating the sacraments.

594 62, 4 sc: “Augustinus dicit, Super Ioan. [Tract 80]: quae tanta vis aquae ut corpus tangat et cor abluat?”

595 62, 5 obj 2: “virtus sacramentorum videtur ex fide dependere, quia, sicut Augustinus dicit, Super Ioan. [Tract 80]: verbum Dei perficit sacramentum, non quia dicitur, sed quia creditur.” Cf. 60, 6 c and 7 ad 1.

596 62, 5 ad 2. Cf. 61, 3 c for an earlier citation of the Romans text.
because the sacraments derive their power from their institution, hence, thirdly, the excellence of Christ’s power consists in this, that he, who gave them their power, could institute the sacraments. And since cause does not depend on effect, but rather conversely, it belongs to the excellence of Christ’s power that he could bestow the sacramental effect without conferring the exterior sacrament.597

We receive “the merit and power” of Christ’s sacrifice by proclaiming it in faith, “calling on the name of Christ;” which name is likewise invoked when the sacraments are celebrated, marking Christ’s own institution of them; who also causes the sacramental effect, though he is not visibly (outwardly) present at the celebration. In other words, because Christ as man is himself the creative Word of God, he shows forth “the merit and power of his passion” by instituting and effecting sacraments by which the faithful may call upon his name and be justified (as Paul has it in the text cited here).

4. In question 65, Aquinas marks the particular place and importance of the Eucharist and Baptism in the sacramental economy as a natural segue into his treatment of each sacrament in turn. Here he explains for the first time598 why “the Eucharist is the greatest of all the sacraments” and “perfects” the others: “because it contains Christ substantially,” and because all the other sacraments “seem to be ordained to this one as to

597 64, 3 c. Cf. In I Cor 1.12, n. 29 for a parallel of this text, in which the same reasons are presented in a different order—three, four, one, and two, with an interesting addition to the last: “Now he could have shared this... with his ministers, that Baptism be consecrated in their names, but he reserved it for himself; otherwise schism would arise in the Church, for people would suppose that there are as many baptisms as baptizers. According to Augustine this is why John the Baptist confessed that he did not know whether Christ would keep this power for himself.” In turn, Thomas repeats the four reasons at In I Cor 11.23, n. 647, in an order more nearly that of III 64, 3 c: one, two, four, three, again with an interesting elaboration upon the last in terms of the Eucharist: “it was especially suitable that he institute in his own person this sacrament, in which his body and blood are communicated. Hence he himself says in John 6.52: ‘The bread that I shall give is my flesh for the life of the world.’”

598 The hint at 60, 3 sc notwithstanding: “in sacramento altaris est duplex res significata, scilicet corpus Christi verum et mysticum, ut Augustinus dicit, in libro sententiarum prosperi.”
their end,” both theologically and liturgically.\textsuperscript{599} For this reason, while Baptism is the greatest sacrament on grounds of “necessity,” it is not the greatest “\textit{simpliciter}.”\textsuperscript{600} The distinction is fundamental to Thomas’s interest in the possibility of personal experience of God. To this end, the Dionysian figure suggests itself again in a \textit{sed contra}: “No one receives hierarchical perfection save by the most God-like Eucharist.”\textsuperscript{601}

III. Baptism and Confirmation as a test case: Experiencing the Word of God (QQ. 66-72)

Given the foregoing interpretation of Thomas’s handling of the sacraments in general, we should expect his treatment of each sacrament in turn to fit the same, threefold pattern: founded in the efficient and effective Word of God, communicated via the instrumentality of human speech, to the end of sanctification—the experience of God. As Aquinas himself puts it here, three things are “necessary” in Baptism: “the form which designates the principal cause of the sacrament; the minister who is the instrumental cause; and the use of the matter, namely, washing with water, which designates the principal sacramental effect.”\textsuperscript{602} As Aquinas develops this pattern in his

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{599} 65, 3 sc and 65, 3 c, citing \textit{Eccles. Hier.} 3. Cf. 67, 2 ad 3.
\item \textsuperscript{600} 65, 3 ad 4. Thomas already said at 62, 5 c that Baptism and the Eucharist are the “principal sacraments” (\textit{potissima sacramenta}).
\item \textsuperscript{601} 65, 3 sc, quoting \textit{Eccles. Hier.} 3.
\item \textsuperscript{602} 66, 10 c. Cf. 72, 3 ad 2.
\end{itemize}
treatment of both Baptism and Confirmation, it is possible to analyze more precisely the compounding iterations of word in the sacraments.

_The trinitarian Word_

1. As we know from 64, 3 c, the sacraments are efficacious because Christ instituted them, the merit and power of whose passion “operates in the sacraments.”\(^{603}\) Another way of saying this is that the sacraments sanctify “by God’s word,”\(^{604}\) in that they “derive their efficacy from the mandate of Christ,” who for instance mandated Baptism in the great commission of Matthew 28.19.\(^{605}\) Christ “made Baptism obligatory” in this way, by “commanding” it; also to Nicodemus, when our Lord said: “Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (Jn 3.5).\(^{606}\) In the case of Confirmation, Thomas notes that Christ instituted the sacrament “not by bestowing but by promising it, according to John 16.7: ‘If I do not go, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.’”\(^{607}\) The general

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\(^{603}\) Here combining the first and third points enumerated at 64, 3 c (note 597, above). Cf. again 66, 6 c: “sicut supra dictum est, sacramenta habent efficaciam ab institutione Christi.”

\(^{604}\) 66, 1 obj 2: “Hugo de sancto Victore dicit [in] quod _Baptismus est aqua diluendis criminibus sanctificata per verbum Dei._” Thomas explicitly denies Hugh’s simple definition of Baptism as water, if by this is understood a denial of the sacramental use of water, that is, that the water is instrumental to the washing. Cf. similarly _Scriptum_ IV q. 1 a. 1 qla 2 arg 1. Given Thomas’s focus upon the “Word of God” in his mature treatment, however, the christological resonance of the quotation of Hugh—“verbum Dei”—takes on a new significance in the terrain of the _Summa._

\(^{605}\) 66, 2 obj 2. Cf. again 66, 5 sc and 66, 8 c.

\(^{606}\) 66, 2 ad 2 and 66, 2 ad 3 (John 3.5 is quoted again at 66, 3 sc).

\(^{607}\) 72, 1 ad 1.
christological principle therefore also holds in this case: “Christ, by the power which he exercises in the sacraments, bestowed on the apostles the reality of this sacrament.”608 And again: “the entire sanctification of the sacraments is derived from Christ.”609

2. In this light, the rest of 64, 3 c follows, namely, that the power of the sacraments consists in their form, the words spoken by the priest, which refer back to Christ, invoking his name.610 As Augustine taught about Baptism, “the word is added to the element and this becomes a sacrament”611—“not in the element itself,” Aquinas adds, “but in the human person, to whom the element is applied, by being used in washing him.”612 Again, therefore, Ephesians 5.26 rightly teaches that one is cleansed by the washing of water “in the word of life,” which means, as Augustine recognized, that “Baptism is consecrated by the words of the Gospel.” The sacramental form accordingly reflects a twofold cause: the instrumental cause of the minister’s illocution, “I baptize you,” and the principal cause of the triune formula, “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”613

3. Thus Aquinas comes, by dint of liturgical exegesis, to a fundamental point not previously made in the Summa’s questions on the sacraments, namely, that the Trinity is

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608 72, 2 ad 1.
609 72, 3 c. Cf. similarly Scriptum IV d. 23, q. 1, a. 3, qla 2-3.
610 The second and fourth points enumerated at 64, 3 c (note 597, above).
611 66, 1 obj 3, quoting again Tract 80 of Super Ioan. (see 60, 4 sc: note 537, above). Thomas cites this text again in his discussion of Confirmation: 72, 3 obj 2 (= Scriptum IV d. 7, q. 1, a. 2, qla 3 arg 2).
612 66, 1 ad 3.
613 66, 5 c, quoting De unico Baptismo 4. Cf. 67, 6 c: “The sacrament of Baptism derives its power principally from its form, which the Apostle calls the word of life (Eph 5.26).”
the principal sacramental cause. For “Christ does not baptize without the Father and the Holy Spirit,” as is plain in the baptismal formula. ⁶¹⁴ While “Christ’s passion is the principal cause as compared to the minister,” therefore, “it is an instrumental cause as compared to the blessed Trinity.” ⁶¹⁵ For “the divine power” which works in Baptism “pertains to the essence” of God, so that the whole Trinity “acts as principal agent,” according to the words of the sacramental form. ⁶¹⁶ For this reason, “Christ commanded the sacrament of Baptism to be given with the invocation of the Trinity.” ⁶¹⁷ Likewise in Confirmation, “the cause conferring fullness of spiritual strength... is the Blessed Trinity” according to the common form of the Church: “I sign you with the sign of the cross, I confirm you with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” ⁶¹⁸

In this way the Word of God functions as a deputy of the Trinity, always already sent by the Father and the Spirit and speaking along with them. Consider, for instance, the otherwise peculiar dynamics of Christ’s own Baptism—the source, Thomas notes, “of the sanctification of our Baptism.” “The Trinity was present in sensible signs: the Father in the voice, the Son in the human nature, the Holy Spirit in the dove.” ⁶¹⁹ Of course, the

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⁶¹⁴ 66, 5 ad 1.
⁶¹⁵ 66, 5 ad 5. Thomas here clarifies what he articulated in an incipient way at III 62, 5 c. Cf. I-II 112, 2 ad 1; III 48, 6; and Reynolds, “Philosophy as the Handmaid of Theology,” p. 229ff. and passim.
⁶¹⁶ 66, 5 ad 6 and 66, 8 ad 1.
⁶¹⁷ 66, 6 c. Cf. In I Cor 1.13, n. 34 for reflections (following Ambrose) on how “the whole Trinity is understood in the name of Christ.”
⁶¹⁸ 72, 4 obj 1 and 72, 4 c in light of the sed contra.
Father is not the Word. Christ, however, is the incarnated way back to God, and to “listen to him,” as the Father commands, is to be drawn into the life of the Trinity. Indeed, even if one is deaf this is the case. For sacramental words are not like those mentioned at Sirach 32.6: “Where there is no hearing, pour out not words (sermonem).” Rather, the words (verba) in the sacraments signify and “derive efficacy from that Word by whom ‘all things were made.’” This one, of whom the evangelist writes at the beginning of his gospel, quoted in the Church’s symbol of faith, speaks and the world is created, and then redeemed (see Jn 1.3, 10-12).

In and after the Word: Understanding and experiencing the sacraments

The spiritual formation of Baptism therefore uses the “outward” sacrament (sacramentum tantum) to accomplish its ultimate, “inward” purpose (res tantum), which is twofold, as Damascene taught: regeneration in the act of Baptism itself, and enlightenment via the spiritual life of faith. Baptism is “a sort of protestation of the faith,” and may be defined in relation to the other sacraments, according to Dionysius, as “the starting point for the sacred enactment of the most revered commandments, the reception of which forms the habits of the soul.” Or, in other words, Baptism marks “the

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620 I 2 prologue.
621 When Jesus is transfigured (Mt 17.5//Mk 9.7//Lk 9.35).
622 66, 5 obj 3.
624 66, 1 c and 66, 1 ad 1 (no text of Damascene is cited).
conferring of our most sacred and Godlike regeneration,” preparing the way for “heavenly glory, which is the universal end of all the sacraments.”625 In this way, the faithful are “written like a spiritual letter” in Baptism, according to II Corinthians 3.2-3, which letter is in turn signed by the Holy Spirit with the sign of the cross in Confirmation.626

The conjunction of res et sacramentum in the divine pedagogy pinpoints again the passional heart of the communication of salvation, the inextricability of word and deed. Faith “comes by hearing,” as St Paul taught (Rom 10.17).627 But all the sacraments flow from Christ’s side on the cross. While blood belongs especially to the Eucharist, therefore, and water to Baptism, the latter nonetheless also “derives its cleansing virtue from the power of Christ’s blood,” according to Revelation 1.5: he “loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”628 Moreover, while Cyprian taught that “suffering can take the place” of literal, water Baptism, and Augustine added that “faith and conversion of heart” also would suffice if water Baptism were “not practicable,” in every case their

625 66, 1 ad 1, quoting several times from Eccles. Hier. 2. I have here, in my text, borrowed partly from the translation of Colm Luibheid in Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), p. 200, whose rendition is closer to Thomas’s Latin than the English Dominicans’ (who translate sanctissimorum mandatorum sacrae actionis as “most holy words and sacraments”). Dionysius himself, however, explains in the following sentence that Baptism thereby “disposes our souls to hear the sacred words as receptively as possible,” the sense of which is reflected in Thomas’s larger argument in 66, 1 and elsewhere, though his Latin translation omits the important reference to “sacred words”—a term that apparently conveys, at once, “divine scripture” as a whole and the particular “august commandments” therein (as the second sentence of ch. 2 of The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy indicates). Scriptum IV d. 3, a. 1 parallels ST III 66, 1 in every important respect.

626 72, 11 c.

627 66, 3 ad 1.

628 66, 3 obj 3 and ad 3. Cf. 66, 7 ad 1: “bodily washing with water is essential to Baptism: wherefore Baptism is called a laver, according to Ephesians 5.26: Cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life,” and 68, 4 c: Baptism was instituted to wash away sin, according to Ephesians 5.26.
efficacy derives “from Christ’s passion and the Holy Spirit.” The faithful are thus
“made conformable’ [see Rom 6.5] to Christ’s passion and resurrection insofar as [they]
die to sin and begin to live anew unto righteousness.” And Chrysostom understood
John the Baptist’s promise that “he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire” (Mt
3.11) as a reference to tribulation, which “washes away sin, and tempers concupiscence,”
perfecting us in judgment, as Hilary adds.

The faithful are trained in this perfect, imitative way first of all by Scripture and
the ministers of the Church, deputized by Christ (as Scripture indicates) to teach and
preach continually. The sacramental experience of God properly includes, after all, some
discursive understanding of him (discens), even if this is not all that is required.
Deacons, therefore, must “read the Gospel in Church and preach it as one catechizing,”
while bishops must “teach” (docere) the gospel, that is, “expound it,” because “the proper
office of a bishop is to perfect, as Dionysius teaches.” Indeed, “our Lord enjoined on
the apostles, whose place is taken by the bishops, ...the duty of teaching, that they might

629 66, 11 c (quoting De unico Baptismo 4) and ad 1. Cf. 66, 5 ad 5; 68, 2.
630 66, 2 c: “Tum etiam quia per Baptismum configuratur homo passioni et resurrectioni Christi,
inquantum moritur peccato et incipit novam iustitiae vitam.” Cf. 66, 12; 68, 2 ad 2, 3 c, and 5 c. Thomas
does not himself cite a text for the word configuratur. He may have been thinking of Romans 6.5 (“if we
have been united with him in a death like his [Si enim complantati facti sumus similitudini mortis eius],
we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his”) as it follows the immediately preceding
references to Baptism at 6.3-4 (Philippians 3.10 and II Timothy 2.11 are comparable, but not explicitly
sacramental). On the other hand, Thomas’s Latin has “Reformabit corpus humilitatis nostrae configuratum
corpori claritatis suae” for Philippians 3.21, a text cited at Ad Rom 6.5, n. 477. Cf. III 49, 3 ad 3 for the
same word (configurati) without citation, after which Thomas quotes Romans 8.17.
631 66, 3 obj 1 and ad 1, citing Chrysostom’s 3rd homily on Matthew and Hilary, Super Matth. 2.
632 I 1, 6 ad 3.
633 67, 1 ad 1, citing Eccles. Hier. 5.
exercise it themselves as being the most important duty of all: wherefore the apostles themselves said: ‘It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables’ (Acts 6.2).”\(^{634}\) Accordingly, the Holy Spirit came “down on the apostles in the shape of a tongue,”\(^{635}\) and Christ entrusted them “with the office of baptizing to be exercised vicariously” (see I Cor 1.17).\(^{636}\) A godparent or sponsor (\textit{patrinus}), for his part, will undertake

the office of nurse and tutor by forming and instructing one who is yet a novice in the faith, concerning things pertaining to Christian faith and mode of life, which the clergy have not the leisure to do through being busy with watching over the people generally: because little children and novices need more than ordinary care.... It is to this that Dionysius refers saying: “It occurred to our heavenly guides,” that is, the Apostles, “and they decided... that the parents of the child should hand it over to some instructor versed in holy things (\textit{docto in divinis paedagogo}), who would thenceforth take charge of the child, and be to it a spiritual father and a guide in the road of salvation.”\(^{637}\)

Unsurprisingly, therefore, Thomas subdivides the ministers themselves into principal and secondary or instrumental agents of the word: for bishops and priests may be distinguished from “ministers” properly speaking, who assist the former. Deacons, for instance, “cooperate with the priest in bestowing the sacraments themselves,” and “inferior” to deacons are other ministers who assist the priest “in those things which are

\(^{634}\) 67, 2 ad 1.

\(^{635}\) 72, 2 ad 1.

\(^{636}\) 67, 2 ad 1. Priests “are consecrated for the purpose of celebrating the sacrament of Christ’s body” (67, 2 c). Only a bishop, however, can confer Confirmation—Acts 8.17 is the scriptural precedent—because “the final completion is reserved to the supreme act or power,” and bishops “posses supreme power in the Church” (72, 11 c). Cf. 72, 3 ad 3: “this sacramental matter is consecrated either by Christ or by a bishop who, in the Church, impersonates Christ.”

\(^{637}\) 67, 7 c, quoting \textit{Eccles. Hier.} 11. Cf. 67, 8 ad 1.
preparatory to the sacraments: the readers, for instance, in catechizing; the exorcists in
exorcizing.” At the same time, because “instruction” is manifold, while Dionysius
ascribes to bishops the leading of someone to embrace the faith, this in fact may “be
undertaken by any preacher, or even by any believer,” just as priests will rightly teach
“the rudiments of faith,” sponsors will instruct in the “manner of Christian life,” and
bishops will instruct “in the profound mysteries of faith, and on the perfection of
Christian life.”

One similarly sees the compounding signification of verbal causes from the
perspective of those who receive Baptism. Our Lord said: “Unless a person be born again
of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (Jn 3.5). Does this
not require faith, hence a knowing participation in Christ, incorporating instruction? Yes,
via the “maternal mouth” of the Church, as Augustine wrote, in order that we “may
imbibe the sacred mysteries” not first of all with our own hearts and mouths but rather
“by the words” of our sponsors who profess their own faith, repent, and renounce the
devil and this world on our behalf. Thus the faith of “the whole Church profits the
child through the operation of the Holy Spirit, who unites the Church together and
communicates the goods of one member to another.”

638 71, 4 c.
639 71, 4 ad 3, citing Eccles. Hier. 2. Cf. Scriptum IV d. 6, q. 2, a. 3, qla 3 for a comparable
discussion.
640 68, 9 c.
641 68, 9 ad 1, quoting De peccatorum meritis et remissiones. 1. Cf. 69, 6 ad 3 and 71, 1 ad 2.
642 68, 9 ad 2.
Similarly in the case of Confirmation: Aquinas notes that Christ did not in fact
institute the form of the sacrament, as far as we know, “nor do we read of the apostles
making use of it.”\textsuperscript{643} Rather, it derives from “the authority of the Church, which always
uses this form.”\textsuperscript{644} This fact does not displace, however, the theological origin and order
of the sacraments under the sign of the Word. For “as ministers of the sacraments” the
apostles “used both matter and form according to Christ’s command.” And we may
presume that

the apostles, in conferring the sacraments, observed many things which are not
handed down in those Scriptures that are in general use. Hence Dionysius says at
the end of his treatise on the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy: “It is not allowed to
explain in writing the prayers which are used in the sacraments, and to publish
their mystical meaning, or the power which, coming from God, gives them their
efficacy; we learn these things by holy tradition without any display,” that is,
secretly. Hence the Apostle, speaking of the celebration of the Eucharist, writes:
“The rest I will set in order, when I come” (I Cor 11.34).\textsuperscript{645}

At one level, Aquinas’s appropriation of Dionysius is paradoxical, as it falls
amidst a vast explication of the Church’s sacramental prayer, that moreover is written
down for others to read and write about in turn. We can, however, take the passage as
proof that Thomas has not forgotten the stated task of the \textit{Summa}, namely, to instruct

\textsuperscript{643} 72, 4 obj 1.

\textsuperscript{644} 72, 4 sc. See 72, 10 sc and 72, 12 sc for similar citations of the liturgy as an authority.

\textsuperscript{645} 72, 4 ad 1: “Quandoque autem tanquam ministri sacramentorum hoc sacramentum praebebant. Et tunc, sicut materia, ita et forma ex mandato Christi utebantur. Multa enim servabant apostoli in sacramentorum collatione quae in Scripturis communiter propositis non sunt tradita. Unde Dionysius dicit, in fine [ch. 7]: \textit{consummativas invocationes}, idest verba quibus perficintur sacramenta, \textit{non est iustum Scripturas interpretantibus, neque mysticum earum, aut in ipsis operatas ex Deo virtutes, ex occulto ad commune adducere, sed nostra sacra traditio sine pompa, idest occulte, edocet eas}. Unde et apostolus dicit, loquens de celebratione Eucharistiae, I Cor 11: \textit{cetera cum venero disponam.”} The English Dominicans note that they translated the quotation of Dionysius directly from his text in this case rather than from the \textit{Summa}. Cf. for another use of this text of Dionysius III 78, 3 ad 9.
beginners in the Christian religion, which is beyond human reason but revealed by God 
“to the apostles and prophets who wrote the canonical books” for our salvation.  We 
thus do well to recognize, Thomas here reminds the reader, that the Church’s prayer, 
itself a gift “from God,” does not admit of simple dissection; yet the words may be 
trusted on apostolic authority, hence devoutly repeated and learned “by holy tradition,” as 
Paul himself proves in his self-authorizing assurance to the Corinthians, recalling his 
earlier injunction: “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (I Cor 11.1).  

When the baptized are confirmed, therefore, they “come spiritually to the age of 
virility,” and so are ready themselves to join the discursive battle for the first time “by 
confessing Christ’s name,” according to I John 2.14: “I write to you, young people, 
because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the 
wicked one.”  Indeed, “all the sacraments are protestations of faith. Therefore just as 
the one who is baptized receives the power of testifying to her faith by receiving the other 
sacraments, so she who is confirmed receives the power of publicly confessing her faith 
by words, as it were ex officio.”  That said, it is traditional for another to “stand for” the 
confirmand to “instruct” her “concerning the conduct of the battle.”  

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646 I 1, 8 ad 2; cf. the general prologue and I 1, 1 c.
647 Cf. In I Cor 11.34, n. 708: “the Church has many things arranged by the Apostle that are not contained in Sacred Scripture: ‘The cities will be inhabited,’ i.e., the churches will be set in order ‘by the sense of prudent men,’ namely, of the apostles (Sir 10:3).”
648 72, 5 ad 1.
649 72, 5 ad 2: “omnia sacramenta sunt quaedam fidei protestationes. Sicut igitur baptizatus accipit potestatem spiritualum ad protestandum fidem per susceptionem aliorum sacramentorum; ita confirmatus accipit potestatem publice fidem Christi verbis profiendi, quasi ex officio.” My translation happens to converge in this case with Aquinas’s insistence that women may be confirmed—quoting Chrysostom: “in the heavenly combats the stadium is open equally to all, to every age, and to either sex.” And again: “In
IV. Conclusion: The incarnational form of Aquinas’s mature sacramentology, scripturally wrought

An initial comparison with the *Scriptum* on the *Sentences* is instructive here in order to understand something of Aquinas’s developing view of the sacraments as words and its scriptural underpinning.

A primary instance of the difference between the two texts may be seen in the handling of the requisite sacramental things and words. In both treatments Thomas articulates a certain causal power of words with respect to things and draws a formal analogy between sacramental signification and the Incarnation. As he writes in the *Scriptum:* “just as the proximate effect” of the sacraments “has as great a likeness as possible to its cause, namely, as they consist of things and words, so does Christ [consist of] Word and flesh.” Missing in the earlier handling of this question, however, is an

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God’s eyes even women fight, for many a woman has waged the spiritual warfare with the courage of a man. For some have rivaled men in the courage with which they have suffered martyrdom; and some indeed have shown themselves stronger than men.” For this reason, it is also not inappropriate for a woman to “stand for” (*tenere*) a man who is confirmed, according to Gal 3.28: “in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female” (72, 10 ad 3).

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650 72, 10 c.

651 *Scriptum* IV d. 1, q. 1, a. 3 and ST III 60, 5-6.

652 *Scriptum* IV d. 1, q. 1, a. 3 sol: “ideo sicut effectus proximi, habent suae causae imaginem quantum possunt, ut scilicet ex rebus et verbis consistant, sicut Christus ex verbo et carne.” See similarly ad 1 on “causal power”: “quia virtus causandi est in rebus ex verbis significantibus, ut dictum est, ideo verba sunt formalia, et res materiales, per modum quo omne compleitivum forma dicitur.” Likewise, Thomas argues from *clarity* in the corpus: “significatio verborum, quae est expressissima, adjungitur significantioni rerum,” which he repeats in ad 3, adding a reference to “effective” causality: “nec efficacia causandi nec expressio significandi poterat esse in rebus, nisi verba adjungerentur, ut dictum est.”
affirmation of the Word incarnate as the cause of sanctification in the sacraments, the direct statement of which in the Summa marks the hierarchy—from Word to words—whereby sacramental signification is determined, perfected, and completed. At first glance, it appears that Thomas affirms this very thing in the Scriptum when he states that the sacraments “contain grace from the sanctification accomplished by the Word of God.” Surely Thomas is thinking here, at least in part, of the second person of the Trinity, as the sense of the sentence seems to demand it. Where, however, the Summa parallel seizes upon Ephesians 5.26—washed by water in the word of life—and several texts of Augustine to draw the connection between the person of the Word and sacramental words, such authorities are absent from this locus of the Scriptum, in which Thomas cites II Timothy 3.15 instead, a text that speaks not of the second person of the Trinity as word but rather of “the sacred writings” as instruction “for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.” While all the pieces of Thomas’s mature theology of sacramental

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653 III 60, 6 c.

654 Scriptum IV d. 1, q. 1, a. 3 sol: “quia gratiam continent ex sanctificatione quae fit per verbum Dei, ut dictum est,” referring to sc 3: “secundum Hugonem, sacramenta ex sanctificatione invisibilem gratiam continent. Sed creatura sanctificatur per verbum Dei; II Tim. 3. Ergo oportet in sacramentis non solum res sed etiam verba esse.”

655 See previous note. Thomas in fact never cites Ephesians 5.26 in the Scriptum, whereas ST III 60, 6 sc marks the first of many citations in the sacramentology of the tertia pars, as we have seen. Scriptum IV d. 3, a. 1, however, a parallel of ST III 66, 1, borrows from both Augustine (Tract 15 in the commentary on John, a text not cited in the questions on Baptism in the Summa) and Hugh the phrase “verbum vitae sanctificata”—apparently a truncation of Ephesians 5.26—with reference to the form of Baptism, namely, words (see qla 1 sol and ad 2, and qla 2 sol). The christological foundation of III 60, 6 is therefore almost explicated in passing in a response to an objection in the Scriptum: “sed verbum vitae est forma completiva sacramenti” (IV d. 3, a. 1, qla 1 ad 2; cf. in turn IV d. 7, q. 1, a. 2, qla 3 arg 3, referring back to this earlier discussion). Cf. Scriptum IV d. 3, a. 4, qla 2, arg 1 for another citation of Augustine’s 15th Tract on John.
signification arguably are present in the *Scriptum*, therefore, they are not assembled around an incarnational center as in the *Summa.*

This same, fundamental difference may be seen regarding the suitable form of Baptism. Thomas understands the Trinity as the “efficient” and “principal agent” in both texts, according to the baptismal formula derived from Matthew 28. He makes no attempt in the *Scriptum*, however, to address the “efficiency” of sacramental words “inasmuch as they derive efficacy from that Word by whom ‘all things were made,’” as the *Summa* has it. Indeed, the person of the Word is never mentioned in this article of the *Scriptum*, just as Ephesians 5.26 and Augustine are again absent.

If the *Scriptum* offers a less developed Christology of the sacraments as words, we should expect it to lack the richness of the *Summa*’s hierarchy of signification as well.

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656 My specific conclusion here fits with the general findings of Turrini, who has tabulated and analyzed Thomas’s citations of Scripture and various other authorities in the *Scriptum*, the *Contra Gentiles*, *De articulis fidei et Ecclesiae Sacramentis*, and the ST with a view to development (and he draws Lombard’s *Sentences*, and the commentaries by Albert and Bonaventure, into the picture as well). With reference to Augustine, Turrini concludes that: (i) compared with other authorities, the Augustinian influence in the ST is primary, particularly in terms of the theology of sign and the christological interpretation of the difference between sacraments in the Old and New Testaments; (ii) while Thomas already appreciated these themes in the *Scriptum*, their deployment in the ST is nonetheless “plus lucide et marquée, plus ‘choisie,’ mieux organisée et présentée,” and otherwise “accompagnée par un enrichissement;” and (iii) “l’introduction de nouvelles citations d’Augustin (ainsi que celles de Denys, Aristote et autres) va cependant plutôt dans le sens de l’augmentation de la puissance dialectique et ne semble pas toucher intimement l’axe portant de l’originalité de qq. 60-65.” In other words, Thomas “a choisi les citations qui pouvaient le mieux servir son objectif,” but “le choix des auctoritates était guidé par l’idée géniale qui sortait de son esprit. La documentation biblique,” therefore, Turrini concludes, “a été beaucoup plus décisive” (*L’anthropologie sacramentelle*, pp. 165-66; cf. p. 135).

657 *Scriptum* IV d. 3, a. 2 and ST III 66, 5.

658 See *Scriptum* IV d. 3, a. 2, qla 1 sol: “*in nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti*, tamquam principale efficiens, a quo Baptismus efficaciam habet,” and ad 1: “principale agens significatur in invocatione Trinitatis quae invisibiliteragit, et ideo relinquebatur ut circa actum materialem poneretur agens secundarium, scilicet minister sacramenti.”

659 III 66, 5 ad 3.
Thomas occasionally in the *Scriptum* likens the words of Scripture and sacramental words, as we have noted. 660 The *Summa* is shot through with far more elaborate and creative scriptural “readings” of the sacraments, however, that are moreover located within a larger web of theological signification, including the ministers of the Church as deputies of the Word. 661

Consider a text like III 69, 5 on certain acts of the virtues—incorporation in Christ, enlightenment, fruitfulness—considered as effects of Baptism. Several of the same authorities are adduced in the *Scriptum*: Augustine and Dionysius, as well as Psalm 22. 662 The *Summa* emphasizes, however, the extent to which human beings are enlightened and made fruitful for good works in this sacrament *by Christ*, yielding knowledge of the truth and grace, and Thomas accents this with a handful of texts of St John and St Paul. While Thomas does not argue here from *Word* per se, therefore, the incarnational form of his procedure is unmistakable; the more if we read the article alongside his commentaries on these same texts from John and Paul, which emphasize

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660 See note 578, above, and again, the citation of II Timothy 3 at *Scriptum* IV d. 1, q. 1, a. 1 sol.

661 See again, e.g., III 67, 1-2, without parallel in the *Scriptum*; 67, 7-8, the parallel for which (*Scriptum* IV d. 3, a. 4) narrowly focuses upon the technicalities of baptismal immersion without reference to the Dionysian figure; 68, 9 ad 1, the parallel for which (*Scriptum* IV d. 4, q. 3, a. 1) bears a seed of the later development in a response to an objection: “pueri quamvis non habeant actum fidei, habent tamen habitum, quem in Baptismo suscipiunt, sicut et habitus aliarum virtutum. Sed si verbum domini intelligatur de actu fidei, tunc referendum est ad illos tantum qui per doctrinam apostolorum imbuendi erant, de quibus praedixerat: *praedicate Evangelium omni creaturae*; nulli enim eorum quibus Evangelium praedicandum erat, Baptismus dari debeat, nisi crederet” (qda 1 ad 1); and 72, 3 c, the principal parallels for which (*Scriptum* IV d. 7, q. 1, a. 2, qda 3 and d. 23, q. 1, a. 3, qla 2-3) lack the focus of the later treatment upon the scriptural basis for the “benedictio Christi” in all the sacraments. Cf. Turrini, *L’anthropologie sacramentelle*, p. 138: “dans la préparation du *De sacramentis in communi* de la Somme, Thomas a complètement renouvelé son répertoire scripturaire, insistant davantage sur les textes du Nouveau Testament, parmi lesquels certains sont de grande force théologique.”

662 *Scriptum* IV d. 4, q. 2, a. 2 qda 3-5.
the coincidence of the Word of God with all the words, especially sacramental words, of
the Church’s faith and life.

(i) Start at the end of the corpus in its quotation from the prologue of John’s
gospel: “We have seen him... full of grace and truth; ...and of his fullness we all have
received” (1.14, 16).663 The beginning of the lectura on John is unsurprisingly ordered by
the person of the Word in light of the evangelist’s prologue, and the first part of John
1.14 establishes the subject for the remainder of the verse, quoted by Thomas: “the Word
became flesh and lived among us.” This, then, explains why it makes sense to add: “We
have seen him,” namely, on account of his incarnation,664 which is a miracle of
“grace,”665 upon which 1.16 elaborates in terms of “fullness.”666

(ii) The labors of teachers therefore give way to the inward enlightenment of God,
who prepares the hearts of the baptized “for the reception of the doctrines of truth,”
according to Jesus’ statement at John 6.45: “It is written in the prophets: ...They shall all
be taught by God.”667 This means, in the New Testament context, that we are taught by
“the Son of God himself,” as in the introduction of the letter to the Hebrews: “‘In many
and various ways,’ that is, in the Old Testament, ‘God spoke to our fathers through the

663 III 69, 5 c.
664 In Ioh 1.14, n. 180. We do not, however, see him in his essence (cf. n. 947 on Jn 6.46: “Not that
anyone has seen the Father, except the one who is from God”).
665 Ibid., n. 182; cf. n. 190.
666 Ibid. 1.16-17, n. 200ff., esp. 204.
667 III 69, 5 ad 2. John 6.45 is cited once in the Scriptum, in an article on justification in Romans 8
(IV d. 17, q. 1, a. 1 qla 2 sol).
prophets; in these days he has spoken to us in his Son’ (Heb 1.1)."\(^{668}\) Or, in other words, “what we are taught by human beings is from God, who teaches from within: ‘You have one teacher, the Christ’ (Mt 23.10),” as Jesus said.\(^{669}\)

Likewise, on the second part of John 6.45: “Every one who has heard the Father and has learned comes to me,” Thomas reflects that one may come to the Father in three, mutually-implicated ways, all of which require hearing and learning from the Word of God. First, one comes “through a knowledge of the truth,” according to Psalm 84.9: “I will hear what the Lord God will speak within me.”\(^{670}\) Because we learn, however, by both love and desire, to hear and grasp what the Father’s “word” entails, a movement of the affections is also required, completing the trinitarian way to God: “For that person learns (\textit{discit}) the word who grasps it according to the meaning of the speaker. But the Word of the Father breathes forth love. Therefore, the one who grasps it with eager love learns: ‘Wisdom goes into holy souls and makes them prophets and friends of God’ (Wis 7.27).”\(^{671}\) Thus, third, in a kind of christological explication of the Dionysian “\textit{non solum discens sed et patiens divina}” of I 1, 6 ad 3, Thomas notes that to learn from God in love

\(^{668}\) \textit{In Ioh 6.45}, n. 944: “\textit{Doctrina enim veteris testamenti data fuit per prophetas; sed doctrina novi testamenti est per ipsum filium Dei; Heb 1.1: multificie multisque modis, idest in veteri testamento: Deus loquens patribus in prophetis, novissime diebus istis locutus est nobis in filio.”}

\(^{669}\) Ibid.: “Sic ergo omnes qui sunt in Ecclesia, sunt docti non ab apostolis, non a prophetis, sed ab ipso Deo. Et, secundum Augustinum, hoc ipsum quod ab homine docemur, est ex Deo, qui docet interius; Mt 23.10: \textit{unus est magister vester Christus.”} Thomas does not cite the Augustinian source here.

\(^{670}\) Ibid., n. 946: “Nam qui venit per cognitionem veritatis, oportet eum audire, Deo inspirante, secundum illud Ps 84.9: \textit{audiam quid loquatatur in me dominus Deus.”}

\(^{671}\) Ibid.: “Qui vero venit per amorem et desiderium, ut dicitur infra [Jn] 7.37: \textit{si quis sitt, veniat ad me, et bibat, et hunc oportet audire verbum patris, et capere illud, ad hoc ut addiscat, et afficiatur. Ille enim discit verbum qui capit illud secundum rationem dicentis; verbum autem Dei patris est spirans amorem: qui ergo capit illud cum fervore amoris, discit; Sap 7.27: \textit{in animas sanctas se transfert, prophetas et amicos Dei constituit.”}
is to “come to Christ through imitative action,” according to Matthew 11.28: “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you.” For the learning and the doing of the Christian life are coextensive in Christ, so that “whoever learns the words perfectly arrives at the right action: ‘The Lord has opened my ear; and I do not resist’ (Is 50.5).”

(iii) It is difficult to understand how it may be that Christians speak and act in Christ, as Scripture teaches; but the principal fruit of Thomas’s mature sacramentology is to begin to see how this is possible in light of the Incarnation. Take the citation of Galatians 2.20, at the start of the corpus of III 69, 5: “it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me.” In his commentary on this text, Thomas argues that “the soul of Paul was set between his body and God; the body, indeed, was vivified and moved by the soul of Paul, but his soul by Christ.” How might Paul’s soul have been vivified and moved by Christ, however, so that, as Thomas says, “as to his relation to God, Christ lived in Paul”?

The answer of III 60 is: by the divine utterance of sacramental words, according to which human flesh, touched by a sensible sign, may

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672 Ibid.: “Per operis autem imitationem itur ad Christum, secundum illud Mt 11.28: *venite ad me, omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos.* Et hoc etiam modo quicumque discit, venit ad Christum: nam sicut conclusio se habet in scibilibus, ita et operatio in operabilibus. In scientiis autem quicumque perfecte discit, venit ad conclusionem: ergo in operabilibus qui perfecte verba discit, venit ad rectam operationem; *Is 1.5: dominus aperuit mihi aurem; ego autem non contradico.* Cf. similarly *In Mat* 11.28, n. 967: “Dicit ergo *venite ad me*; quod verbum etiam sapientiae est, Eccl 24.26: *transite ad me omnes qui concipiscitis me et a generationibus meis adimplemini.* Unde appropinquate ad me indociti, quia vult se communicare.”

673 *In Gal* 2.20, n. 109: “Anima autem Pauli constitutabatur erat inter Deum et corpus, et corpus quidem vivificabatur et movebatur ab anima Pauli, sed anima eius a Christo.”

674 Ibid.: “quantum ad relationem ad Deum, Christus vivebat in Paulo.”
experience a conformity or assimilation to the passion of the Word. And this is apparently Thomas’s answer in terms of Galatians 2, as well: “the love of Christ... brings it about that I am always nailed with him.” Or, in more familiar words: “Christ loved the Church and delivered himself up for it, that he might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life” (Eph 5.25-26). Thus, as 69, 5 has it, Christ’s members derive “from their spiritual Head” by Baptism a “spiritual sense consisting in the knowledge of truth, and spiritual movement which results from the instinct of grace,” again, according to John 1.14 and 16.

(iv) Having been duly transformed in knowledge and virtue by reception of the sacraments, Christians will turn to the formation of others, as Paul says: “In Christ Jesus by the gospel I have begotten you. I appeal to you, then, be imitators of me” (I Cor 4.15-16). And Paul’s begetting of the Corinthians “in Christ Jesus by the gospel” indicates the polyvalence of *word* in the grammar of Christian proclamation. Originally, the “word” is Christ’s own, as Romans 10.17, for instance, reveals: “faith comes from what

675 See again III 60, 6 in light of 60, 3.

676 *In Gal* 2.20, n. 110: “amor Christi... facit ut semper ei configar.”


678 III 69, 5 c: “a capite spirituali, quod est Christus, derivatur ad membra eius sensus spiritualis, qui consistit in cognitione veritatis, et motus spiritualis, qui est per gratiae instinetum. Unde Jn 1 dicitur: *vidimus eum plenum gratiae et veritatis, et de plenitudine eius omnes accepiimus.*”

679 III 69, 5 ad 3: “effectus Baptismi ponitur fecunditas qua aliquis producit bona opera, non autem fecunditas qua aliquis generat alios in Christo, sicut apostolus dicit, I Cor. 4: *in Christo Iesu per Evangelium ego vos genui.*” Thomas only quotes I Corinthians 4.15 here; I have added the following verse to complete his thought regarding the “beget[ting of] others in Christ.” I Cor 4.15 is cited once in the *Scriptum*, in an article on “spiritual propinquity” in relation to Baptism (IV d. 42, q. 1, a. 2 arg 7), to argue that “ex praedicatione Evangelii et instructione fit spiritualis cognatio, et non solum ex Baptismo.” The reply is notable for its evangelical sensibility, however Christologically underdeveloped, namely, that “instruction” binds Christians together in a particular relationship: “apostolus eos ad fidem instruxerat per modum catechismi; et sic aliquo modo talis instructio habebat ordinem ad spiritualem cognitionem” (ad 7).
is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ,” particularly his sacramental word, as we have seen. The word is, however, proclaimed over and over, not least as “the seed” by which Paul begot the Corinthians “in Christ.” Is this proclaimed word the same as the baptismal word? Not primarily or “principally,” recalling the causal argument of III 66, 5, which begins from the singularly effective Word of God, as Thomas also argues on the basis of I Corinthians 1.12 and following. It is manifestly absurd to claim to belong to Paul or Apollos or Cephas, even if one was baptized by one of them, since the Baptism is Christ’s. As St John records: “‘He upon whom you shall see the Spirit descending and remaining upon him, he it is that baptizes with the Holy Spirit’ (Jn 1.33). Accordingly, the baptized are called Christians from Christ alone and not Paulians from Paul: ‘Only let us be called by your name’ (Is 4:1).” And yet, “because a

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680 In I Cor 4.15, n. 222: “Unde, assignans rationem eius quod dixerat, subdit nam in Christo Iesu per Evangelium vos genui. Est autem generatio processus ad vitam, homo autem vivit in Christo per fidem. Gal 2.20: quod autem nunc vivo in carne, in fide vivo filii Dei. Fides autem, ut dicitur Rom 10.17, est ex auditu, auditus autem per verbum. Unde verbum Dei est semen, quo apostolus eos genuit in Christo. Unde Jas 1.18: voluntarie nos genuit verbo veritatis.” This portion of the commentary builds on the extensive earlier treatment of Paul’s proclamation in the first lecture on I Corinthians 2. Cf. Ad Rom 10.17, n. 844, where Thomas offers two possible interpretations of “verbum Christi,” both drawn from I Corinthians: “vel quia est de Christo, I Cor 1.23: nos praedicamus Christum Iesum, vel quia a Christo habent quod mittantur I Cor 11.23: ego enim accepi a domino quod et tradidi vobis.” (Torrell notes that Thomas himself did not correct this portion of the commentary beyond ch. 8: STA I, p. 340.)

681 III 66, 5 c and ad 3.

682 In I Cor 1.12, n. 24: “Alius autem dicit ego autem sum Christi, qui solus benedixit, quia solius Christi virtus operatur in Baptismo Christi. Jn 1.33: super quem videris spiritum descendere et manere, ipse est qui baptizat. Et ideo baptizati a solo Christo denominantur Christiani, non autem a Paulo Paulini. Is 4.1: tantummodo invocetur nomen tuum super nos.” Cf. n. 28: “Christus, qui principaliter et interius baptizat,” and again, n. 29 on the “two powers proper to Christ in the sacrament of Baptism”: the divine power, by which one is cleansed interiorly from sin by the Trinity, and the power proper to his human nature, understood in four respects (see note 597, above). Similarly, see the conclusion of n. 34: “if the sufferings of Christ alone, if the name of Christ alone, confers the power to be saved on the baptized, then it is from Christ alone that Baptism has the power to sanctify” (si solius Christi passio, si solius Christi nomen virtutem confert Baptismo ad salvandum, verum est proprium esse Christo, ut ex eo Baptismus habeat sanctificandi virtutem).
man also baptizes, as a minister and member of Christ, the Church uses this formula in baptizing: ‘I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,’ which is... in keeping with the formula given by Christ... (Mt 28.19), where he also calls the apostles baptizers. It is according to this command that the minister says: ‘I baptize you.’”

Again, therefore, the signification of the gospel is compounded with a certain emphasis, in Thomas as in Scripture, on the point of origin, but with attention to its subsequent dissemination. In connection with Paul’s begetting of the Corinthians, for instance, Thomas cites James 1.18, an apparently baptismal text: “By his own will he has begotten us by the word of truth,” where the masculine pronoun refers to God, “the Father of lights” (Jas 1.17), as the primary speaker. At this level, Paul is a child among children and a sibling of all, as he also was begotten in Christ. And yet the Word evidently recruits secondary and tertiary speakers to serve as analogical parents, whence Paul can charge the Corinthians to imitate him (see I Cor 4.16) “as a father to the same

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683 Ibid., n. 25: “Quia tamen etiam homo baptizat ministerio, ut membrum et minister Christi, ideo Ecclesia utitur hac forma in baptizando: ego te baptizo in nomine patris, et filii, et spiritus sancti, quod quidem est expressius secundum formam a Christo traditam, qui dixit discipulis: docete omnes gentes, baptizantes eos in nomine patris, et filii, et spiritus sancti, etc., ubi ipsos apostolos dicit baptizantes, secundum quem modum sacramenti minister dicit: ego te baptizo.” Cf. similarly n. 20: “Dominus autem, Mt [28.19] ult., discipulis praeceputum dedit de doctrina simul et Baptismo, dicens: euntes docete omnes gentes, baptizantes, et cetera.” This same material is treated more fully at III 66, 5. Of course, Paul concludes at I Corinthians 1.17 that “Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel” (just as Jesus is said not to have baptized at John 4.2; and Thomas notes in this connection Luke 4.43: “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for the purpose,” as well as Isaiah 61.1: “The Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted”). Thomas suggests, however, as at III 67, 2 ad 1, that “Christ sent the apostles to do both, but in such a way that they preached in person, as they said in Acts 6.2: ‘It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables’” (all from In I Cor 1.17, n. 39; cf. In Eph 3.8, n. 149).

684 In I Cor 4.15, n. 222 (note 680, above).

685 In I Cor 4.16, n. 223: “quia ipse genitus erat a Christo, ex consequenti eos habebat ut fratres.”
degree as he imitated Christ, who is the main father of all.\textsuperscript{686} And he sends them
Timothy, his “beloved child in the Lord, to remind” them, he says, “of my ways in Christ,
as I teach them everywhere in every church” (I Cor 4.17), a statement that reminds
Aquinas of Colossians 1.5-6: “You have heard of this hope before in the word of the
truth, the gospel that has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole
world, so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly
comprehended the grace of God.”\textsuperscript{687} The Colossians, however, learned about the gospel
“from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your
behalf, and he has made known to us your love in the Spirit,” Paul continues (Col 1.7-8).
Thus, “there is the same relationship between instructor and father as that of waterer and
planter and of builder of the superstructure and layer of the foundation,”\textsuperscript{688} as Thomas
already noted when commenting on I Corinthians 3.6: “I planted, Apollos watered, but
God gave the growth.”\textsuperscript{689} Or, “abandoning the simile based on agriculture,” and in
precise parallel with ST I, 1, 6 c on sacred doctrine as wisdom: the architect, and by
implication the “subordinate artisans,” are wise insofar as they “consider the principal

\textsuperscript{686} Ibid.: “Intantum ergo debebant eum imitari ut patrem, inquantum et ipse Christum imitabatur, qui est omnium principalis pater.” Cf. similarly ibid. 1.4, n. 12 (citing III Jn v. 4: “I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my children are walking in the truth”) and 1.13, n. 32 (discussed in ch. 2 of the present study).

\textsuperscript{687} Ibid. 4.17, n. 224: “Unde subdit sicut ubique in Ecclesia doceo. Col 1.5: audistis veritatis Evangelium, quod pervenit ad vos, sicut et in universo mundo.”

\textsuperscript{688} Ibid. 4.15, n. 222: “eadem comparatio, quantum ad praedicationem Evangelii, paedagogi ad patrem, ... rigatoris ad plantatorem, et superaedificatoris ad fundatorem.”

\textsuperscript{689} Ibid. 3.6-8, nn. 135-38. Cf. n. 146 on I Corinthians 3.9: “God’s ministers are coadjutors, inasmuch as they labor in cultivating and guiding the faithful.”
cause of the building” and “lay a solid foundation” (see I Cor 3.10), imitating in both respects God’s prior action in Jesus Christ (see I Cor 3.11).690

Thomas’s commentary on Ephesians 3.8-9: “To me, the least of all the saints, is given this grace... to enlighten all people,” another text cited at III 69, 5,691 makes sense in this light, as it places Paul’s vocation to preach and teach692 in the context of the exemplary wisdom of God. Both actions of Paul are ordered toward “the dispensation of the mystery,” as 3.9 has it, “in God who created all things.” The “mystery” (sacramenti) in this case is not sacramental in the sense of a particular sacrament but rather broadly evocative of the wisdom of God in Christ, a central theme in the first four chapters of I Corinthians. Hence Thomas begins by citing I Corinthians 1.17 and ends with 2.6-7,693 the latter of which marks, as we saw in chapter 2, the culmination of three lectures that are especially ordered around the proclamation of God’s wisdom694 —“in mysterio, quae abscondita est, quam praedestinavit Deus ante saecula in gloriam nostram” (I Cor 2.7); and again: in Christ “are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2.3). As Matthew Lamb has suggested, therefore, the mystery or “sacrament” of the Incarnation is what Thomas has in view here,696 the precedent of which establishes the

690 Ibid. 3.10, n. 148: “relicta similitudine agriculturae;” “sapiens in aedificio dicitur qui principalem causam aedificii, scilicet finem, considerat, et ordinat inferioribus artificibus quid sit propter finem agendum;” “ad sapientem architectum pertinet idoneum fundamentum collocare.” Cf. ibid., n. 151; and ST I I, 6 c.


692 Already explicated in the first lecture on Ephesians 3, in terms of verse 3, for instance: “according to revelation the mystery has been made known to me, as I have written above in a few words” (see In Eph 3.3, n. 138), and verse 5: “now revealed to his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit” (see In Eph 3.5, n. 140), and finally in terms of I Corinthians 15.1: “Now I would remind you of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand” (In Eph 3.6, n. 142).

693 See In Eph 3.8-9, nn. 149, 151.

694 The third and fourth lectures on ch. 1 and the first lecture on ch. 2: In I Cor 1.17b-2.7, nn. 40-87.

695 Cited at In Eph 3.8, n. 149 and In I Cor 2.2, n. 75: “In Christo autem Iesu, ut dicitur Col 2.3, sunt omnes thesauri sapientiae et scientiae Dei absconditi.”

696 St Thomas Aquinas, Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians, trans. Matthew L. Lamb (Albany, NY: Magi, 1966), notes 52, 73, 79 (pp. 281, 286, 288). Lamb’s point is occasioned first of all by Thomas’s comment on Ephesians 2.12 (“you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from Israel’s way of life and strangers to the testaments [testamentorum]”), as he suggests that Paul means that the Gentiles were “deprived a share in the sacraments” (privabantur... participatione sacramentorum) (In Eph 2.12, n. 105). Lamb repeats the point, however, in light of Thomas’s handling of Paul’s recurring “sacramentum” at Ephesians 3.3-5, for which Thomas finds a parallel in I Corinthians 4.1 (cited at In Eph 3.2, n. 135): “Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries.”
character of Christian speech: “words or signs” which are imparted mysteriously “in the Spirit” (I Cor 14.2) because they transcend the human intellect, and yet are disclosed all the same as they are “spoken... for our glory” (I Cor 2.7), hence known “in the full light” of what is preached, according to Jesus’ prayer to the Father: “This is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (Jn 17.3).

Only in this way—because, again, to learn the gospel is to enact it—could the Corinthians escape the arrogance of those who suppose that the kingdom of God belongs to the “rich in speech,” in the proverbial sense of “mere talk” (Prov 14.23). “For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power” (I Cor 4.20), according to Jesus’ own promise: “Not everyone that says to me ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one that does the will of my Father” (Mt 7.21).

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697 In I Cor 2.7, nn. 86-87: “quia modus docendi et doctrinae debet esse conveniens, ideo dicitur quod loquitur eam in mysterio, id est in aliquo occulto, vel verbo vel signo. I Cor 14.2: spiritus loquitur mysteria,” and: “quod dicit in gloriam nostram, exponendum est omnium fidelium, quorum gloria haec est ut in plena luce cognoscant ea quae nunc in mysterio praedicantur, secundum illud Jn 17.3: haec est vita aeterna ut cognoscant te solum Deum verum, et quem misisti Iesum Christum.” Cf. the discussion of I Corinthians 4.1 and 14.2 in ch. 2 of the present study.

698 Cf. I 1, 4 obj 1 and 4 c; 1, 6 ad 3.

699 In I Cor 4.19, n. 226: “Non sermonem eorum, qui inflati sunt, sed virtutem, quasi dicat: non propter haec ex mea examinatione approbabuntur, qui abundant in verbis, sed si abundarent in virtute; quia, ut dicitur Prov 14.23: ubi verba sunt plurima, ibi frequenter egestas.” Thomas here repeats what he said at In I Cor 1.17, n. 41 (see discussion in ch. 2).

700 Ibid.: “non enim in sermone est regnum Dei, sed in virtute, id est, non ideo aliqui pertinent ad regnum Dei, qui abundant in sermone, secundum illud Mt 7.21: non omnis qui dicit mihi: domine, domine, intrabit in regnum caelorum, sed qui facit voluntatem patris mei.” Cf. ibid. 3.16, n. 173: “knowledge without love does not suffice for God’s indwelling.”

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As Aquinas explained at III 60, all sacraments consist of things and words for an anthropological reason that strikes to the heart of incarnational Christology, as well. Human beings are composed of body and soul; hence sacraments sensibly touch the body, signifying Christ’s flesh, and intelligibly communicate a word to the soul, signifying Christ’s person, the latter moreover effecting and perfecting the former. In this way, matter and form “combine in the formation of one thing,” namely, the experience by the faithful of sanctification as “a certain conformity” to the passion of the Word.\(^\text{701}\)

This is preeminently true in the case of the Eucharist, wherein the matter is miraculously transformed into Christ’s body and blood by his own words. The Summa’s eleven questions on this sacrament thus usefully consolidate the foregoing teaching about sacraments in general while exemplifying the argumentative arc of the \textit{tertia pars} as a whole, according to which sacraments further explicate the Incarnation and that which the Word subsequently did and suffered.\(^\text{702}\)

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\(^{701}\) III 60, 6 in light of esp. 60, 3; cf. 60, 7 c.

\(^{702}\) Recalling III prologue’s précis of questions 1-59: “prima est de ipso incarnationis mysterio, secundum quod Deus pro nostra salute factus est homo; secunda de his quae per ipsum salvatorem nostrum, idest Deum incarnatum, sunt acta et passa.”
Aquinas divides his teaching into seven parts: a general introduction to the sacrament itself (73), followed by analyses of its matter (74-77), form (78), effects (79), recipients or use (80-81), minister (82), and the rite (83).\textsuperscript{703} For our purposes, it is convenient first to draw out the introductory themes and theses of question 73; then the dynamics of the Word as the ordering cause of the sacrament in questions 74-78; and lastly, the effects of the primary cause in questions 79-83, incorporating Thomas’s concluding meta-linguistic analysis of the Church’s eucharistic rite.

I. \textit{Pascha nostrum immolatus est Christus:} The singular passion of the Eucharist (Q. 73)

We noted in the previous chapter several of Aquinas’s references to the Eucharist amid his treatment of the sacraments in general.\textsuperscript{704} Question 73 takes these as read, building on the theology of Baptism and Confirmation as initiatory sacraments—and in the case of the former, most necessary—that nonetheless are not consummative like the Eucharist, in which divine worship principally consists, inasmuch as it is the sacrifice of the Church. Moreover, this sacrament does not impress upon human beings a character, because it does not ordain them to any further sacramental action or benefit received, since rather it is “the end and consummation of all the

\textsuperscript{703} III 73 prologue.

\textsuperscript{704} III 60, 3 sc and 65, 3. See also 63, 6 c and 66, 9 ad 5, below.
sacraments,” as Dionysius says. But it contains within itself Christ, in whom there is not the character but the very plenitude of the priesthood.⁷⁰⁵

Perhaps for this reason, question 73 is half the length of the comparable introduction to Baptism, question 66, and is organized differently. Both questions end by reflecting on figurative aspects of the sacraments—baptisms of blood and of the Spirit or repentance in the case of 66, and the paschal or Passover lamb in the case of 73. Question 66 handles Christ’s institution of the sacrament in the second article, however, which, along with article 1, serves to orient all that follows to the Word; while question 73 can presume the christological focus of preceding questions and introduce immediately the singularity of the Eucharist in a simplified scriptural argument the end of which is Christ’s word of institution, tied to the figure of the passion.

Article 1 begins by situating the Eucharist vis à vis Baptism and Confirmation. Just as human life is first generated, then grows to maturity, and is preserved by food, so may these sacraments be understood spiritually in relation to, and as distinct from, one another. Baptism and Confirmation concern the human person within him or herself, while the Eucharist is added from without, “like food, or clothing, or something of the kind.” Dionysius was correct, therefore, that “both Confirmation and the Eucharist are ordained for perfection” (as are all the sacraments⁷⁰⁶), but only the Eucharist is in itself “spiritual refreshment.”⁷⁰⁷ For the other sacraments “are perfected by the use of the

⁷⁰⁵ 63, 6 c, quoting Eccles. Hier. 3.
⁷⁰⁶ See again III 60, 2-3 and 6.
⁷⁰⁷ 73, 1 obj 1 (citing Eccles. Hier. 4) and ad 1. 66, 1 ad 1 likewise began by appropriating the sacramental theology of the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy; and see again 63, 6 c, above. Cf. In I Cor 11.23, n.
matter,” as for instance “Baptism is by ablution and Confirmation by signing with chrism,” whereas the Eucharist “contains something which is sacred absolutely, namely, Christ’s own body.”

The conjunction of res et sacramentum thus occurs in the other sacraments as the matter is applied for a person’s sanctification—she is born and matures spiritually, is absolved, is married—but in the Eucharist “in the matter itself,” before its reception. And the form reflects this difference “as will be shown later on,” adds Aquinas, a point that has everything to do with the supremacy of the Eucharist in his mature sacramentology: because “the words spoken in the consecration of the matter are the form” of the Eucharist tout court.

While Aquinas will come to a focused treatment of the sacramental form in question 78, he presumes here the hierarchy of signification argued for in previous questions, according to which words, above all Christ’s own, interpret things. Hence he notes in article 2 that the Eucharist “is ordained for spiritual refreshment, which is conformed to corporeal refreshment” according to John 6.55: “My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.” Jesus’ statement indicates how the Eucharist is “the consummation of the spiritual life and the end of all the sacraments,” the instance par

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650 for a parallel arrangement of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist with respect to one another in terms of generation, growth, and food.

708 73, 1 obj 3 and ad 3. Cf. In I Cor 11.23, n. 651 for the same point.

709 73, 1 ad 3.

710 73, 1 obj 3. See again, by contrast, 66, 1 ad 3: “accedente verbo ad elementum fit sacramentum, non quidem in ipso elemento, sed in homine, cui adhibetur elementum per usum ablationis.” Cf. 78, 1 c, discussed below: “the form of the other sacraments implies the use of the matter, as for instance, baptizing or signing, but the form of this sacrament implies merely the consecration of the matter, which consists in transubstantiation.” Cf. In I Cor 11.24, nn. 660 and 670 for parallels.

711 73, 2 c.
excellence of conformity to Christ. Why else would he have said in the previous verse of the same gospel: “Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in you” (Jn 6.54), if not to indicate by means of this particular sacramental figure the end of the faithful, namely, as Augustine says, “the fellowship of his body and members,” according to I Corinthians 10.17: “we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.” This is a unity given in Baptism, Thomas carefully notes, that includes a share in Christ’s “bread and chalice,” if only by desire. For “by Baptism one is ordained to the Eucharist,” so that just as baptized children “believe through the Church’s faith, so they desire the Eucharist through the Church’s intention, and as a result receive its reality.”

Although the Eucharist is not the starting point for the spiritual life, therefore, and “is not necessary for salvation in the same way as Baptism is,” it nonetheless functions prototypically vis à vis the other sacraments, because only here do the faithful finally suffer the form or pattern that all the sacraments signify. Only with reference to this sacrament, for instance, could Augustine have “heard the voice of Christ as it were saying to him: ‘Nor shall you change me into yourself as food of your flesh, but you shall be

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712 73, 3 c.

713 73, 3 obj 1 and ad 1, quoting from Augustine’s commentary on John and from his letter Ad Bonifacium (= Pseudo-Beda, In I Cor 10.17). Cf. 78, 1 ad 4; 79, 1 ad 1; 80, 9 ad 3.

714 73, 3 c.

715 Ibid.: “perceptio Baptismi est necessaria ad inchoandam spiritualem vitam, perceptio autem Eucharistiae est necessaria ad consummandam ipsam”—though the latter “non hoc modo est de necessitate salutis sicut Baptismus.” Cf. 73, 5 ad 4: “the sacrament of the Eucharist, although after Baptism in the receiving, is yet previous to it in intention.”
changed into me.”716 And again: while “Baptism is the sacrament of Christ’s death and passion whereby one is born anew in Christ..., the Eucharist is the sacrament of Christ’s passion whereby one is made perfect in union with Christ who suffered,”717 a point already made in question 66 where Aquinas first quotes I Corinthians 5.7-8: “Christ our pasch is sacrificed; therefore let us feast.”718 On this familiar basis—of the incarnate Word crucified—Thomas observes that what is common to all the sacraments may be attributed “antonomastically” to the Eucharist “on account of its excellence.”719 For all the sacraments (i) are sacrificial, as “something sacred is done” in them, (ii) pertain to the “synaxis” or “communion” of the faithful, (iii) are aids for “our journey through this present life,” and (iv) confer grace.720 But only the Eucharist (i) commemorates our Lord’s passion “which was a true sacrifice,” (ii) is the sacrament of unity, joining the faithful to Christ and to one another, and is itself called (iii) Viaticum, as “it supplies the way of winning thither,” and (iv) Eucharist, that is, “good grace,” because “the grace of God is life everlasting” (Rom 6.23).721

716 73, 3 ad 2, quoting Confess. 7. Cf. similarly In Ioh 6.27, n. 895.
717 73, 3 ad 3.
718 66, 9 ad 5: “Both sacraments, namely Baptism and the Eucharist, are a representation of our Lord’s death and passion, but not in the same way. For Baptism is a commemoration of Christ’s death insofar as we die with Christ that we may be born again into a new life. But the Eucharist is a commemoration of Christ’s death, insofar as the suffering Christ himself is offered to us as the Paschal banquet, according to I Cor 5.7-8.”
719 73, 4 ad 2.
720 73, 4 obj 2.
721 73, 4 c.
The last two articles of question 73 build on the foregoing by focusing on the passion. Of course, Christ, “of whom it is said that ‘he did all things well’ (Mk 7.37),”\textsuperscript{722} instituted the Eucharist on the night before he died, when he “conversed with his disciples for the last time.” Thomas offers three reasons, however, for the fittingness of the decision. First, as Eusebius recognized, just prior to his physical departure Christ “consecrates the sacrament of his body and blood for our sakes, in order that what was once offered up for our ransom should be fittingly worshiped in a mystery.” Eucharistic worship is therefore contiguous with the sacrifice of the passion because Christ crucified is the subject of both, who moreover himself initiates the sacrament by “consecrating” it. Second, again with reference to Romans 3.25\textsuperscript{723}: God proposed Christ as a “propitiation through faith in his blood.” This sacrament therefore perpetually “shows forth” this fact as it succeeds the paschal lamb of the old law, according to I Corinthians 5.7: “Christ our pasch is sacrificed,” whence Christ “institutes a new sacrament after celebrating the old,” as Pope Leo says. Third, and implicit in the first two reasons, Christ instituted this greatest and most powerful sacrifice and oblation “at his last parting with his disciples,” Pope Alexander teaches, “in order that it might be held in the greater veneration,” and so be “fixed in the hearts and memories of the disciples whom he was about to quit for the passion,” as Augustine says.\textsuperscript{724}

\textsuperscript{722} 73, 5 sc: “hoc sacramentum institutum est a Christo, de quo dicitur Mk 7: bene omnia fecit,” following Jesus’ curing of the deaf man. And St Mark continues: the crowd was “astounded beyond measure,” saying, “he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak” (Mk 7.37).

\textsuperscript{723} Quoted at III 61, 3 c, 62, 5 ad 2, and 64, 3 c, as noted in the previous chapter.

\textsuperscript{724} All from 73, 5 c. \textit{In I Cor} 11.17, n. 631 (“when you come together” for the Lord’s supper) effectively presents the same three reasons, reversing however the first and second: “first, because the
Thomas thus emphasizes again that the sacraments in general, and the Eucharist in particular, facilitate a sanctifying experience of the crucified Word. For the “spiritual being” that rightly interested Dionysius is available to us “as we are new-born in Christ through Baptism, and through the Eucharist eat Christ,” according to our Lord’s express instruction: “do this for a commemoration of me” (Lk 22.19), and according to his explication, recorded by Paul and repeated in the canon of the mass: “As often as you do these things, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (I Cor 11.26).

Likewise, Thomas quotes I Corinthians 5.7-8 once more in article 6, which emphasizes Paul’s understanding of the Lord’s intention: that to proclaim his sacrifice as our own figure precedes the truth in proper order. But the paschal lamb was a figure or shadow of this sacrament. Accordingly, after the supper of the paschal lamb, Christ gave this sacrament. For it says in Col 2.17 about all practices of the law: ‘These are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.’ Second, in order that from this sacrament he might pass immediately to his passion, of which this sacrament is the memorial. Therefore, he said to the disciples: ‘Arise, let us go from here’ (Jn 14.31), namely, to his passion. Third, in order that this sacrament be impressed more sharply on the hearts of the disciples, to whom he gave it in his last quiet retreat.”

In I Cor 11.23, n. 648 combines the first and third reasons of III 73, 5 c in offering two more suggestions as to the fittingness of the time of institution: “first, as to the quality of the time. For it was night. For the soul is enlightened by virtue of this sacrament. Hence I Sam 14.27 says that Jonathan put forth the tip of his staff and dipped it in the honeycomb and put his head to his mouth, and his eyes became bright; on which account it says in Ps 139.12: The night is as bright as the day. Second, as to the negotiations carried on at that time, namely, he instituted this sacrament, which is a memorial of the passion, when he was delivered over to the passion by which he passed to the Father: Come here, stranger, and prepare the table, and if you have anything at hand, let me have it to eat (Sir 29.26).”

725 73, 5 obj 1 (citing Eccles. Hier. 2) and ad 1.

726 73, 5 obj 3: “secundum illud Mt 26: hoc facite in meam commemorationem.” Aquinas mistakenly cites Matthew 26 here, which is a parallel of the institution of the Lord’s Supper that he often employs in these questions (see below) for the all-important “this is my body” of verse 26, but which does not contain the words “do this for a commemoration [or “remembrance”] of me.” I Corinthians 11.24ff. is a third important parallel of the institution for Thomas (see, e.g., the following note), which reflects more nearly the version of Luke than that of Matthew.

727 73, 5 ad 3: “Unde signanter dicit: haec quotiescumque feceritis.” The English Dominicans helpfully note that Thomas is quoting here without citation from the canon of the mass. He had already cited I Corinthians 11.26 several articles earlier, however, where he quoted the entire verse upon which the liturgical text is based: “quotiescumque manducaveritis panem hunc et calicem biberitis, mortem domini annuntiabis, donec veniat” (73, 3 obj 3).
carries with it an obligation to behave in an appropriate way, feasting “with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”728 In this way we receive the effect of the sacrament (res tantum) which is the spiritual grace of communion with Christ, “the sweetness of every taste” (Wis 16.20), figurally represented by the manna with which the LORD sustained the Israelites in the wilderness.729 And here Thomas is once more tracking Paul’s argument in I Corinthians, as may be seen by the quotation in an objection (“all were baptized in the cloud and in the sea” [I Cor 10.2]), and by subsequent reflection on “the passage of the Red Sea and the manna,” to which Thomas takes the corpus to be an adequate response.730 For Paul of course recalls the Israelites’ passage “through the sea” (I Cor 10.1) and the “spiritual food” that they ate (I Cor 10.3) as “examples” (figurae) “written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come” (I Cor 10.11; cf. I Cor 10.6).731

Aquinas’s commentary on I Corinthians 5.7-8 usefully amplifies the foregoing introduction to the eucharistic word in terms of the intellectual or spiritual implications of

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728 73, 6 sc: “apostolus dicit, I Cor 5: Pascha nostrum immolatus est Christus. Itaque epulemur in azymis sinceritatis et veritatis.”

729 73, 6 c. Cf. 73, 4 ad 3: the Eucharist may also be called a host “because it contains Christ who is a host... of sweetness (Eph 5.2).”

730 73, 6 obj 2: “transitus maris rubri fuit figura Baptismi, secundum illud I Cor 10: omnes baptizati sunt in nube et in mari. Sed immolatio agni paschalis praeecessit transitum maris rubri, quem subsecutum est manna” and c, at the end: “per hoc patet responsio ad obiecta.”

731 And Paul continues at I Corinthians 10.4: “all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ,” about which Thomas appropriates, at 74, 6 ad 1, the comment of Ambrose (in De Sacram. 5) that “Christ’s sacrifice... is signified by the water which flowed from the rock in the desert,” since water flowed from Christ’s side in the passion (see 74, 6 c).
conformity to Christ.\footnote{As noted in ch. 2, we do not have the text of Aquinas’s commentary on I Corinthians 10.} Paul emphasizes Christ’s sacrifice in order to encourage the faithful to be like him, observes Aquinas, since “the paschal lamb was a figure of our sacrificed pasch.” Like the Jews before us, therefore, we should celebrate

by eating Christ—not only sacramentally: “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you” (Jn 6.54), but also spiritually, by relishing his wisdom: “Those who eat me will hunger for more, and those who drink me will thirst for more” (Sir 24.21), with spiritual joy: “With glad shouts and songs of thanksgiving; a multitude keeping festival” (Ps 42.4).\footnote{In I Cor 5.8, n. 247: “Sicut ergo agnus figuralis fuit figura nostri Paschae immolati, ita figuralis observantia paschalis debet conformari observantiae novi Paschae. Ergo quia Christus immolatus est Pascha nostrum, itaque epulemur, scilicet manducantes Christum, non solum sacramentaliter, sed etiam spiritualiter, secundum illud Jn 6.54: nisi manducaveritis carmem filii hominis, et biberitis eius sanguinem, non habebitis vitam in vobis, sed spiritualiter fruendo sapientia eius, secundum illud Sir 24.21: qui edunt me, adhuc esurient, et qui bibunt me, adhuc sitient, et sic cum gaudio spirituali, secundum illud Ps 42.4: in voce exultationis et confessionis, sonus epulantis.”}

One thus feasts with Christ “by conforming the truth to the figure,” as Thomas says, that is, “not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (I Cor 5.8). “Crafty mischief” has no place here, according to Proverbs 26.25: “When he speaks graciously believe him not, for there are seven mischiefs in his heart.”\footnote{Ibid., n. 248: “Deinde determinat modum epulandi secundum conformitatem veritatis ad figuram, dicens non in fermento veteri, neque in fermento malitiae, et nequitiae,” and further on: “Per nequitiam vero intelligitur fraudulenta machinatio. Prov 26.25: quando sumpsit vocem suam, non credideris ei, quoniam septem nequitiae sunt in corde eius.”} Rather, as Paul continues at II Corinthians 2.17: “We do not adulterate the word of God but with sincerity in Christ we speak.” For “truth and grace came by Jesus Christ” (Jn 1.17)\footnote{Ibid., n. 249: “Nam sincerum dicitur quod est sine corruptione. Unde II Cor 2.17 dicitur: non sumus sicut plurimi adulterantes verbum Dei, sed ex sinceritate in Christo loquimur. Veritas vero ponitur contra figuras veteris legis, sicut Jn 1.17 dicitur: veritas et gratia per Iesum Christum facta est, quia scilicet verum Pascha cum veritate et non cum figuris celebrare debemus.”}—“hidden for centuries,” notes Thomas, commenting

\footnote{732 As noted in ch. 2, we do not have the text of Aquinas’s commentary on I Corinthians 10.}
on this text, but “openly taught when he came into the world: ‘I came into the world for this, to testify to the truth’ (Jn 18.37).” Of course, “Christ is the truth,” as he himself says (Jn 14.6), “eternal and not made, begotten of the Father. But all created truths were made through him, and these are certain participations and reflections of the first Truth, which shines out in those souls who are holy.”736

II. Hoc est corpus meum: Matter and form of the eucharistic Word (QQ. 74-78)

Aquinas almost might have proceeded immediately to the form of the Eucharist, treated in question 78, before reflecting upon the matter of the sacrament; and in a sense he did, as questions 74-77 evince a constant consciousness of language, often with reference to the words of the sacramental form and also the effective Word of life. The present ordering matches, however, the pattern of prior questions, including III 60, which in Augustinian fashion introduced words as determining and perfecting of antecedent, sensible things, and III 66 and 72, which likewise treated the sacramental matter before coming to the form.

**Question 74**

736 *In Ioh 1.17, nn. 206-07: “veritas per Christum facta est, quantum ad sapientiam et veritatem occultam a saeculis, quam veniens in mundum aperte docuit, infra 18.37: in hoc natus sum, et ad hoc veni in mundum, ut testimonium perhibeam veritati. Sed si ipse Christus est veritas, ut infra 14.6 dicitur, quomodo per ipsum facta est veritas, cum nihil possit fieri a seipso? Respondeo, dicendum est, quod ipse est per suam essentiam veritas increata; quae aeterna est, et non facta, sed a patre est genita; sed per ipsum factae sunt omnes veritates creatae, quae sunt quaedam participaciones et refugentiae praeae veritatis, quae in animabus sanctis relucent.”*
Again, Christ rightly instituted the sacrament with the matter of bread and wine. But his choice may be understood in four ways, all familiar from the previous question: the Eucharist is for “spiritual eating,” memorializes the passion, “avails for the defense of soul and body” (noting Ambrose’s use of Leviticus 17.14: “the life of the animal is its blood” to explain I Corinthians 11.20), and symbolizes the gathering of many into one in the Church, per I Corinthians 10.17. Each way indicates Thomas’s acceptance that “the end of this sacrament is the use of the faithful” (albeit, again, “the sacrament is perfected in the consecration of the matter”), tied to the figure of Christ’s passion, who “compares himself to a grain of wheat, saying: ‘Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain’ (Jn 12.24).

These preliminary reflections frame the return in article 4 to the prior fact of Incarnation. Blessed Gregory wrote of the “various customs of the churches” regarding leaven in the sacramental bread: “The Roman Church offers unleavened bread because our Lord took flesh without any intermingling; but the other churches offer leavened bread because the Word of the Father was clothed with flesh, as leaven is mixed with flour.” Either way—for “it is suitable that every priest observe the rite of his church,”

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737 Ibid. 74, 1 c: “Christus hoc sacramentum sub specie panis et vini instituit, sicut patet Mt 26. Unde panis et vinum sunt materia conveniens huius sacramenti”—recalling the sed contra of two articles prior: that the one who “did all things well” (Mk 7.37) instituted the Eucharist (see note 722, above).

738 Ibid.

739 Ibid. 74, 2 c and ad 3. On the other hand, “the use of the consecrated matter belongs to a certain perfection of the sacrament, in the same way as operation is not the first but the second perfection of a thing” (78, 1 ad 2). Use thus does not pertain to “the essence” of the Eucharist (78, 1 ad 3).

740 74, 3 sc.
notes Thomas\textsuperscript{741}—the incarnational analogy effectively serves as a reminder of “the cause of sanctification,” in the words of III 60, 6 c, the one who would teach the faithful, especially in this sacrament, to take up his “sweet yoke” and so “learn” gentleness and humility of heart and “find rest for [their] souls” (Mt 11.29).\textsuperscript{742} Hence, several reasons that Thomas offers in the remainder of the corpus of 74, 4 for why “the custom of celebrating with unleavened bread is” nonetheless “more reasonable” underline this formational aim of the Word. Christ instituted the sacrament “on the first day of Unleavened Bread” (Mt 26.17, Mk 14.12, Lk 22.7), and this “is more in keeping with the sincerity of the faithful, according to I Corinthians 5.7: ‘Christ our pasch is sacrificed; therefore let us feast... with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.’”\textsuperscript{743} Likewise, the reasons why water should be mixed with the wine, articulated in article 6, emphasize the spiritual formation of the sacrament in and after Christ with reference, again, to its institution, his passion, and the effects of the sacrament: unity with Christ and everlasting life.\textsuperscript{744}

\textit{Questions 75-77}

Christ’s body and blood are certainly “in” the sacrament, therefore, by his own attestation: “This is my body, which is given for you” (Lk 22.19), and again: “This is my

\textsuperscript{741} 74, 4 c.

\textsuperscript{742} 74, 3 ad 1: “Hoc autem sacramentum pertinet ad \textit{suave iugum} Christi, et ad veritatem iam manifestatam, et ad populum spiritualis,” an apparent reference to Matthew 11.30’s “iugum suave.” Cf. again on “sweetness” (\textit{suavitas}) 73, 4 ad 3 and 73, 6 c, above.

\textsuperscript{743} 74, 4 c.

\textsuperscript{744} 74, 6 c. Cf. similarly 74, 8 ad 2 on incorporation with Christ.
blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Mt 26.28), but they are present in a way that sense cannot perceive. The “savior’s words” must thus be taken by faith, as Cyril emphasized: “for since he is the truth, he does not lie.” Accordingly, Thomas sets about ordering the words of Scripture, Christ’s above all, to introduce to his readers the subject of the change of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. In this way, as always, the argument adds more particular brushstrokes—philosophical distinctions, extending the precision and depth of the palette—only after the canvas is well-prepared and primed and the outline of the portrait plausibly rendered.

Christ’s presence in the Eucharist perfects the new law as “the very image of the things to come,” beyond the “figure” or “shadow” of these things in the old law (Heb 10.1). Thus the Son is himself the “figure” of the Father’s “substance” as his mark or “image,” as Thomas noted of Hebrews 1.3; just as Colossians 2.17: “these are only a
shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ,” a scriptural parallel for Hebrews 10.1,749 may be understood with reference to Colossians 1.15: “He is the image of the invisible God.” But in each case the Son is the image of the Father as his word, through whom all creatures were made (Gen 1.3); who moreover “was made flesh” (Jn 1.14) in order “to testify to the truth” (Jn 18.37);751 by whom, “in these last days” (Heb 1.2), the Father handed down the New Testament, according to John 1.18: God the Son—incarnate (Jn 1.14), bearing “grace and truth” after the “law was given through Moses” (Jn 1.17)—makes the Father known.752 This one “upholds all things by the word of his power” (Heb 1.3) also in this respect: that the Eucharist should in fact “contain Christ himself,” as Dionysius says, even Christ crucified, whence it “perfects all the other sacraments.”753


750 In Heb 1.3, n. 27: “Filius ergo, qui est imago invisibilis Dei (Col 1.15), proprie dicitur figura.”

751 In Heb 1.2, n. 15: “verbum conceptum similitudo patris existens, sit etiam similitudo ad quam omnes creaturae factae sunt. Gen 1.3: dixit Deus: fiat lux, et cetera,” citing John 1.14 and 18.37 further on. Cf. similarly ibid., nn. 21-23 and ibid. 1.3, n. 31ff. Commenting on Colossians 1.15-17, Thomas first connects Christ as image and Word in terms of the Son’s “likeness” to the Father, conceived and then signified as a “word” (n. 31; cf. n. 34)—against therefore the Arians, according to Hebrews 1.3: “He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power” (n. 32). On the Word’s particular role in creation, see esp. nn. 35-39 and 42, incl. with reference to Hebrews 11.3: “By faith we understand that the world was framed by the word of God; that from invisible things visible things might be made” (n. 39), and again Hebrews 1.3 (n. 44).

752 In Heb 1.2, n. 19: “Item illud per prophetas, sed istud in filio, id est, per filium, qui est dominus prophetarum. Jn 1.18: unigenitus, qui est in sinu patris, ipse enarravit.”

753 75, 1 c: “Et ideo oportuit ut aliquid plus haberet sacrificium novae legis a Christo institutum, ut scilicet contineret ipsum passum, non solum in significacione vel figura, sed etiam in rei veritate. Et ideo hoc sacramentum, quod ipsum Christum realiter continet, ut Dionysius dicit, 3 cap. Eccles. Hier., est perfectivum omnium sacramentorum aliorum, in quibus virtus Christi participatur.”
If Christ’s presence in the sacrament depends upon the singular action of the incarnate Word to this end, then it will also be explicable in terms of love, hope, and faith, Thomas continues. Christ, on account of his love, “assumed for our salvation a true body of our nature” with which he “unites us with himself in this sacrament,” as he says: “Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them” (Jn 6.56). In this way our hope is uplifted “from such familiar union of Christ with us,” and our faith in both his divinity and his humanity is perfected, according to his command: “Believe in God, believe also in me” (Jn 14.1). For since “faith is of things unseen,” the incarnate Christ would show us “invisibly” both his divinity and his humanity, the latter “in this sacrament.”

One thus understands Augustine’s concern to interpret rightly John 6.63: “It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing.” Some suppose Christ’s flesh “to be eaten as it is divided piecemeal in a dead body, ... not as it is quickened by the spirit,” to which the bishop would respond, echoing Jesus’ words: “Let the spirit draw nigh to the flesh, ... then the flesh will profit very much. For if the flesh profits nothing, the Word would not have been made flesh, that it might dwell among us.” A distinction, in other words, must be made between “Christ’s body in its proper species,” which is taken away according to Matthew 26.11: “you will not always have me,” and the way that “he is invisibly under the species of the sacrament” wherever it is performed, according to Matthew 28.20: “Behold I am with you always, even to the consummation of the

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754 Ibid.

755 75, 1 ad 1, quoting Tract 27 on John.
world.” Thus “Christ’s body is not in this sacrament in the same way as a body is in a place, which by its dimensions is commensurate with the place, but in a special manner proper to this sacrament,” namely, “spiritually, that is, invisibly, after the manner and by the virtue of the spirit.” As Augustine concludes on the basis of the second half of Jesus’ statement at John 6.63 (“The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life”): “If you have understood Christ’s words spiritually concerning his flesh, they are spirit and life to you; if you have understood them carnally, they are also spirit and life, but not to you.”

The words: “This is my body” (Hoc est meum corpus), are of course “the form of the sacrament” by which its “effect is signified,” a point that, formally speaking, holds for all the sacraments as media of experience of the passion of the Word. Christ’s sentence also epitomizes, however, that which distinguishes this sacrament from others.

1. As preceding articles indicated, but Thomas repeats the point in this more particular context, the conversion of sacramental matter is supernatural along the order of the Incarnation. We ought not, then, “look for nature’s order in Christ’s body,” argued Ambrose, “since the Lord Jesus was himself brought forth from a Virgin beyond nature.”

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756 75, 1 obj 2 (quoting Augustine, Tract 30 on John) and ad 2.
757 75, 1 ad 3.
758 75, 1 ad 4, quoting Tract 27 on John.
759 75, 2 c and 3 c. On Thomas’s shorthand for the longer sacramental formula, see note 745, above.
760 III 60, 6.
And Chrysostom likewise observed of John 6.63 that Jesus’ words of spirit and life “are rent from all such necessity which exists here on earth, and from the laws here established.” This means, as Thomas elaborates the point, that “every created agent is limited in its act, as being of a determinate genus and species,” while God “is infinite act, as stated in the *prima pars*, hence his action extends to the whole nature of being.” And God, as a feature of his power, “can work not only formal conversion, so that diverse forms succeed each other in the same subject, but also the change of all being, so that the whole substance of one thing may be changed into the substance of another;” a change that, in the case of the Eucharist, occurs instantaneously when the words of Christ are spoken by the priest. Thus, according to Mark 7, when Jesus said “‘Ephphatha,’ that is, ‘Be opened,’ immediately the ears of the man were opened and the fetter on his tongue was removed.”

2. If Christ is present miraculously in the Eucharist as an act of divine power, this nonetheless leaves unaddressed questions about both his person and the sacramental species. In terms of his person, he says: “This is my body,” hence “the change of the bread and wine is not terminated at the divinity or soul of Christ.” There are, the reader

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761 75, 4 c, quoting *De sacramentis* 4 and Chrysostom, homily 47.

762 *Ibid.* Likewise, the accidents are able to continue in the sacrament “without a subject” on account of divine power, since God “is the first cause both of substance and accident..., just as (*sicut*) without natural causes he can produce other effects of natural causes, like (*sicut*) he formed a human body in the Virgin’s womb ‘without the seed of man,’” in the words of the vespers hymn for Christmas (77, 1 c; cf. 77, 3 ad 2).

763 75, 7 c. Cf. further 78, 4 ad 3.

764 76, 1 ad 1. Cf. 74, 4 c, quoted above: “*panis est proprie sacramentum corporis Christi, quod sine corruptione conceptum est, magis quam divinitatis ipsius, ut infra patebit.*”

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will recall, three substances in Christ: the divine person, the assumed body, and the soul,\(^{765}\) the last acting upon the matter of the body by animating it, just as in every other human instance\(^{766}\) (hence the distinction stands between the Word as “the effective principle of all life” and the human soul as a more proximate, “formal principle” of life\(^{767}\)). For this reason, the Catholic faith necessarily confesses that “the entire Christ is in this sacrament,”\(^{768}\) for the Word “never set aside the assumed body,”\(^{769}\) just as after the triduum Christ’s body and soul, “being raised from the dead” (Rom 6.9), are “always really united.”\(^{770}\) The bread and wine therefore must be converted into Christ’s body and blood “by the power of the sacrament,” Thomas concludes, while his divinity and soul are in the sacrament by “natural” or “real” concomitance.\(^{771}\)

3. The sacramental species thus become the locus of concern for the remainder of question 76 and all of question 77, effectively in order better to understand, as Thomas

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\(^{765}\) 76, 1 obj 1: “Christus existat ex tribus substantiis, scilicet divinitate, anima et corpore, ut supra habitum.”

\(^{766}\) III 2, 5 sc: “Sed corpus Christi dicitur animatum, secundum illud quod Ecclesia cantat: animatum corpus assumens, de virgine nasci dignatus est. Ergo in Christo fuit unio animae et corporis,” in light of ad 1: “Et propter hoc ex unione animae et corporis in Christo non constituitur nova hypostasis seu persona, sed advenit ipsum coniunctum personae seu hypostasi praeexistenti.” Cf. the corpus: “Pertinet... ad rationem speciei humanae quod anima corpori uniatur, non enim forma constituit speciem nisi per hoc quod sit actus materiae; et hoc est ad quod generatio terminatur, per quam natura speciem intendit,” and sc: “corpus non dicitur animatum nisi ex unione animae.”

\(^{767}\) III 2, 5 ad 3. Cf. III 5, 3 ad 2 and 75, 6 ad 2.

\(^{768}\) 76, 1 c.

\(^{769}\) 76, 1 ad 1. Thus, Thomas continues, we read in the symbol of Ephesus that “participes efficimur corporis et sanguinis Christi, non ut communem carnem percipientes, nec viri sanctificati et verbo coniuncti secundum dignitatis unitatem, sed vere vivificantem, et ipsius verbi propriam factam.”

\(^{770}\) Ibid.

\(^{771}\) 76, 1 c and ad 1. Cf. 76, 2 c and 4 c.
notes again near the end, why Augustine’s use of John 6.63 not only corrects the misguided realism of Berengarius but flags the “spirit and life” with which the “words” in question—*Hoc est corpus meum*—are concerned;\(^{772}\) the words that “effect only what they signify” but therefore not less than what they signify, a fact that bears some elaboration.\(^{773}\) The faithful should not doubt, upon hearing Christ’s testimony, that “the sacramental species are the sacrament of Christ’s true body.” And it is likewise important to know that “the breaking of these species is the sacrament of our Lord’s passion, which was in Christ’s true body.”\(^{774}\) But for these very reasons it is useful to reflect upon how the whole Christ, including the accidents and dimensions of his body and blood, may be present in the sacrament substantially, eluding the perception of human sense;\(^{775}\) and again, how, even as the accidents of bread and wine remain without a substantial form “according to the order of grace,”\(^{776}\) as may be seen,\(^{777}\) God occasionally grants a

\(^{772}\) 77, 7 ad 3 (quoting Tract 27 on John) in light of 75, 1 ad 4. Thomas first indicated his concern in these questions with Berengarius at the end of 75, 1 c: “Unde et Berengarius, qui primus inventor huius erroris fuerat, postea coactus est suum errorem revocare, et veritatem fidei confiteri.”

\(^{773}\) 77, 1 c, again on the matter of accidents without a subject: “Nec potest dici quod hoc [viz., quod sunt, sicut in subiecto, in aere circumstante] fiat miraculose virtute consecrationis, quia verba consecrationis hoc non significant; quae tamen non efficiunt nisi significatum.” Cf. 75, 6 c: “si forma substantialis remaneret, nihil de pane convertetur in corpus Christi nisi sola materia. Et ita sequeretur quod non convertetur in corpus Christi totum, sed in eius materiam. Quod repugnat formae sacramenti, qua dicitur, *hoc est corpus meum*.”

\(^{774}\) 77, 7 c.

\(^{775}\) See 76, 5 c: “Substantia autem corporis Christi comparatur ad locum illum mediante dimensionibus alienis, ita quod e converso dimensiones propriae corporis Christi comparatur ad locum illum mediante substantia. Quod est contra rationem corporis locati. Unde nullo modo corpus Christi est in hoc sacramento localiter;” 76, 7 c: “Accidentia autem corporis Christi sunt in hoc sacramento mediante substantia.... Et ideo, proprie loquendo, corpus Christi, secundum modum essendi quem habet in hoc sacramento, neque sensu neque imaginatione perceptibile est.” Cf. 76, 4 and 5 *passim*: “per modum substantiae;” 76, 1 ad 3: “substantia corporis Christi vel sanguinis est in hoc sacramento ex vi sacramenti, non autem dimensiones corporis vel sanguinis Christi.”

\(^{776}\) 77, 1 ad 1. Cf. 75, 6; 77, 1; 77, 5; 77, 6.
miraculous change in the species—of “shape, color, and the rest, so that flesh, or blood, or a child” are seen—to emphasize the truth of Christ’s presence in the sacrament, which ordinarily can “be seen by a wayfarer through faith alone.” For the accidents of bread and wine are preserved providentially “because it is not customary, but horrible, to eat human flesh and to drink blood,” but also because receiving “our Lord’s body and blood invisibly may redound to the merit of faith.”

*Question 78*

Question 78 takes up directly what Aquinas has in effect been discussing indirectly since the third objection of 73, 1. The intervening questions studied how Christ effects this sacrament of which he is also the subject, namely, (i) by himself speaking the words of consecration (ii) that transform the sacramental species into his body and blood. The similarity and the difference between this and all other sacraments is therefore clear. Like the others, the sacramental form and matter of the Eucharist mark “a certain conformity” to (i) the Word (ii) who suffered and died. Only in the Eucharist, however, does (i) the Word himself speak the sacramental form (ii) that signifies the gift of his body and blood in the consecrated matter. With this background, the reader is prepared in

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777 Because “in this sacrament of truth the sense is not deceived with regard to its proper object of judgment” (77, 7 c; cf. 77, 1 obj 1). Hence it is clear that, for instance, the sacramental species can be corrupted (77, 4), that things like ashes or worms can be generated from them (77, 5), that they can nourish, according to I Corinthians 11.21: “one goes hungry and another becomes drunk” (77, 6 sc), that they are broken (77, 7), and that another liquid can be mixed with the consecrated wine (77, 8).

778 76, 8 c and 7 c.

779 75, 5 c.

780 III 60, 6 c.
question 78 to reflect further upon how what is common to all the sacraments may be
attributed antonomastically to the Eucharist,\(^{781}\) whence the question also serves as a
useful segue into questions 79-83 on the effects, use, ministration, and rite of the
sacrament, Christ’s word being the necessary condition of subsequent sanctification.

For more must be said about the layers of signification in the sacramental form.
The first and second layers are, for the Christian community, irrevocably tied together:
the incarnate Word spoke at the Last Supper—“This is my body”—in words that are
recorded in Scripture.\(^{782}\) The third, fourth, and fifth layers are similarly compounded, in a
descending hierarchy of signs: the Word speaks, again and again, the words of the
sacramental form—“This is my body”—pronounced by priests the world over.

Thomas introduces this hierarchy of language and text at 78, 1 as the lexical and
grammatical frame for the remainder of the question. The _sed contra_ reminds the reader
why this is important: not because of the endlessly enthralling interplay of texts per se,\(^{783}\)
but because of the primary speaker, “the Lord Jesus,” whose “words and expressions”
accomplish the consecration, as Ambrose wrote. For “by all the other words spoken” in
worship, “praise is rendered to God” and “prayer is put up for the people, for kings, and

\(^{781}\) 73, 4 ad 2.

\(^{782}\) See notes 726 and 745, above.

\(^{783}\) A charge that might be levelled at Mark Jordan, whose interpretations of Thomas are generally
content to analyze the textual layers of various _scientia_ up to and including sacred Scripture but not
beyond; whence, in turn, after Thomas, the principal task is likewise primarily to grade his various
appropriators and imitators on the extent to which they succeed in avoiding the violence of the “police,”
understood by Jordan as the advancing of intolerant, unhistorical, anti-pedagogical, and incurious
imitations of the master. See esp. ch. 1, “St Thomas and the Police,” in Jordan, _Rewritten Theology:
Aquinas after His Readers_ (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006); also the Conclusion, “Writing Theology after
Thomas—and His Readers.”
others. But when the time comes for perfecting the sacrament, the priest no longer uses his own words but the words of Christ. These are the words that vouchsafe Christ’s very person to the faithful via “the miraculous change of the substance, which can only be done by God. Hence the minister in performing this sacrament has no other act save the pronouncing of the words.”

In this context the provenance of Christ’s words is naturally important, and Thomas emphasizes that the third and fourth layers of signification, Christ’s word in the sacramental form, always already follow upon, and literally repeat, the founding formula of the first and second layers, Christ’s word of institution recorded in Scripture. Regarding the first and third layers, “the words of the gospel” indicate “that Christ blessed, and this blessing was effected by certain words.” Hence “the blessing of the consecration is now performed by reciting the things which were then accomplished. For if the consecration was not performed then by these words, neither would it be now,” since in every case “these words have no power except from Christ pronouncing them.” In terms of the second and fourth layers, Matthew 26, for instance, might lead one to suppose that Christ gave his body and blood to the disciples before he said “this is my body.” The participle saying, however, “implies sequence of the words uttered with what goes before,” thus avoiding any potential discrepancy between “the order of what

784 78, 1 sc, quoting De sacramentis 4.
785 78, 1 c.
786 78, 1 ad 1.
787 78, 1 obj 1: “Sed Christus ante benedixit panem acceptum, et postea dixit: accipite et comedite, hoc est corpus meum, ut habetur Mt 26.” The parallel texts of Luke 22 and I Corinthians 11 could give rise to the same concern.
took place” in the gospel account and the actual event of the institution (the latter presumably reflected in the mass, as reception follows consecration of the matter\textsuperscript{788}). For it is not necessary for the sequence to be understood only with respect to the last word spoken, as if Christ had just then pronounced those words when he gave it to his disciples. Rather, the sequence can be understood with regard to all that had gone before; so that the sense is: “While he was blessing, and breaking, and giving to his disciples, he spoke the words, ‘Take, eat,’” and so on.\textsuperscript{789}

Again, therefore, the form is fitting for our Lord used it, Thomas notes in the sed contra of article 2.\textsuperscript{790} More precisely, however, and in light of the foregoing teaching, the form reflects “most fittingly” the conversion of bread (terminus a quo) into the body of Christ (terminus ad quem). The middle term, is, marks a relation of being between subject and predicate, whence the demonstrative pronoun, this, marks the sacramental species which continue only as “sensible accidents” of the nominative, Christ’s body “in its own substance.”\textsuperscript{791} In this light, it is clear, Thomas continues, why the Word (sermo Dei) speaks in a different mood when consecrating the Eucharist than when creating all

\textsuperscript{788} See III 83, 4 c: “Sic igitur populo praeparato et instructo, acceditur ad celebrationem mysterii. Quod quidem et offertur ut sacrificium, et consecratur et sumitur ut sacramentum, primo enim peragitur oblatio; secundo, consecratio materiae oblatae; tertio, perceptio eiusdem.”

\textsuperscript{789} 78, 1 ad 1, following Augustine, De consens. Evang. 2. Cf. for another instance of testing the sacramental form against the antecedent norm of Scripture 78, 3 c: “inde est quod sacerdos eodem ritu et modo, scilicet tenendo calicem in manibus, omnia haec verba proferit.卢caet etiam 22 interponuntur verba sequentia verbis primis, cum dicitur: hic calix novum testamentum est in sanguine meo.”

\textsuperscript{790} 78, 2 sc: “dominus hac forma in consecrando est usus, ut patet Mt 26.”

\textsuperscript{791} 78, 2 c: “quia ipsa conversio exprimitur in hac forma ut in facto esse, necesse est quod extrema conversionis significantur ut se habent in facto esse conversionis. Tunc autem terminus in quem habet proprium naturam suae substantiae, sed terminus a quo non manet secundum suam substantiam, sed solum secundum accidentia, quibus sensui subiacet, et ad sensum determinari potest. Unde convenienter terminus conversionis a quo exprimitur per pronomem demonstrativum relatum ad accidentia sensibilia, quae manent. Terminus autem ad quem exprimitur per nomen significans naturam eius in quod fit conversion, quod quidem est totum corpus Christi, et non sola caro eius, ut dictum est. Unde haec forma est convenientissima: hoc est corpus meum.”
things. In the case of the Eucharist, “he operates effectively and sacramentally,” hence “the last effect of the consecration should be signified by a substantive verb in the indicative mood and the present tense.” In the case of creation, “he worked merely effectively, according to the efficiency of the command of his wisdom,” hence his “word is expressed by a verb in the imperative mood, as in Genesis 1.3: ‘Let there be light, and light was made.’”

Turning in article 3 to the other half of the sacramental form, an entirely different cache of problems, presented in nine objections, provides Thomas the occasion to take several more steps in the cumulative argument of the question as a whole. “The substance of the form” is rather more complicated in the case of the wine, reflective especially of its Matthean source, while drawing upon elements from Luke 22 and I Corinthians 11:

“This is the chalice of my blood of the new and eternal testament, the mystery of faith, which shall be shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

The first words: “This is the chalice of my blood,” should be understood to effect the change of the wine, while the latter words “show the power of the blood shed in the passion which operates in

792 78, 2 ad 2. Cf. 78, 2 obj 2, quoting Ambrose again from De sacramentis 4 (see 75, 4 c and 78, 1 sc; cf. 74, 6 ad 1): “sermo Christi hoc conficit sacramentum. Quis sermo Christi? Hic quo facia sunt omnia, jussit dominus et facta sunt caeli et terra. Ergo et forma huius sacramenti convenientior esset per verbum imperativum, ut dicetur: hoc sit corpus meum.” For further reflections on the disanalogy between the sacramental and creative words, see 78, 4 sc and ad 2 (on instrumental causality).

793 See the oblique hint at 78, 3 c (note 789, above), and more explicitly 78, 3 obj 9: “nullus Evangelista recitat Christum haec omnia verba dixisse. Ergo non est conveniens forma consecrationis vini,” and ad 9: “tamen omnia haec verba fere ex diversis Scripturae locis accipi possunt. Nam quod dicitur, hic est calix, habetur Lk 22 et I Cor 11. Matthaei autem 26 dicitur: hic est sanguis meus novi testamenti, qui pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum. Quod autem additur, aeterni, et iterum, mysterium fidei, ex traditioe domini habetur, quae ad Ecclesiam per apostolos pervenit, secundum illud I Cor 11: ego accepi a domino quod et tradidi vobis.”

794 78, 3 obj 1: “hic est calix sanguinis mei, novi et aeterni testamenti, mysterium fidei, qui pro vobis et pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum.” Thomas concludes in the corpus “quod omnia praedicta verba sunt de substantia formae.”

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this sacrament\textsuperscript{795} in three ways that together specify the ascetical end of the sacramental Word. 1. Christ’s blood is, as the form says, “the new and eternal testament,” because by it he “secures our eternal heritage,” namely, “to enter the sanctuary (sanctorum)” confidently (Heb 10.19). 2. It follows that Christ’s blood is “the mystery of faith” because God put him forward in this way as a “propitiation” or sacrifice “through faith in his blood,” in the familiar words of Romans 3.25.\textsuperscript{796} And here Thomas presses on to quote for the first time the following verse as well: that God did this on account of his own justice, hence as a goad to those who would be justified by him in the faith of Jesus. 3. Thus Christ’s blood is “shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins,” in the words of the form, because in this way our consciences are cleansed from dead works to the end of worshipping “the living God!” (Heb 9.14).\textsuperscript{797}

Thomas’s emphasis upon the holiness of the faithful as washed in the blood of Christ evokes again the Augustinian foundation of his sacramental theology: that “the word is added to the element and this becomes a sacrament,” understood as a certain formation in and after the Word’s passion.\textsuperscript{798} Indeed, the quotation of this sentence of Augustine several articles later underlines its pervasiveness.\textsuperscript{799} At the same time, Thomas is building here on the appropriation of Ambrose at 74, 1 which 76, 2 ad 1 in turn took up

\textsuperscript{795} 78, 3 c.

\textsuperscript{796} Last cited at 73, 5 c, the practical culmination of that question (note 724, above), and several times before in the questions on sacraments in general (see note 723, above).

\textsuperscript{797} 78, 3 c.

\textsuperscript{798} See again esp. articles 3 and 6 of III 60. Thomas quotes Augustine’s sentence at III 60, 4 sc and 6 sc, inter alia (see ch. 6, note 537).

\textsuperscript{799} 78, 5 c, below.
with reference to the “effect” of the presence of the “whole Christ” in both species of the sacrament, namely, that Christ’s “body is offered for the salvation of the body, and his blood for the salvation of the soul.” Sacraments are, after all, a “proportionate medicine” for the body and soul of human beings, whence God “touches the body through the sensible element and the soul through faith in the words.” Or, as Augustine put it, reflecting the same hierarchy of body and soul, Christ’s word “touches the body and washes the heart... not because it is spoken but because it is believed.”

Returning to 78, 3, the consecration of the wine completes the sacrament in a manner analogous to the intelligible word that completes—as it interprets and perfects—the sensible sign, in both cases by drawing the faithful more surely into an understanding of their own experience of Christ’s passion. The chalice, for instance, functions as a passional metaphor “because, like a cup, it inebriates, according to Lamentations 3.15: ‘He has filled me with bitterness, he has inebriated me with wormwood.’ Hence our Lord himself spoke of his passion as a chalice, when he said: ‘Let this chalice pass away from me’ (Mt 26.39).” Likewise, the form speaks of a “new testament” or covenant on account of Hebrews 8.8 (quoting Jeremiah), which is a law that the Lord places in the mind and writes on the heart (Heb 8.10) by the power of Christ’s blood, according to Hebrews 9.15-16: a death has occurred that redeems those who are called. All together, the separate consecration of the blood “expressly represents Christ’s passion,” concludes

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800 76, 2 ad 1.
801 III 60, 6 c, quoting Tract 80 on John. Cf. again 60, 7 ad 1, 62, 4 sc, and 62, 5 obj 2.
802 78, 3 ad 1.
803 78, 3 obj 3 and ad 3.
Thomas, making it more fitting to mention “the effect of the passion in the consecration of the blood than in that of the body, which is the subject of the passion.”

Circling back to where he began at 78, 1, Thomas comes in article 4 to the fifth and final layer of sacramental signification, the words of the priest. The sed contra quotes Ambrose in De sacramentis 4 for the third time in the question to note both the continuity of Christ’s creative and sacramental word and also the intensification of the latter, which not only “keeps in being things that are, but changes them into something else.” There can be no doubt, therefore, about the primary power of Christ’s word in this sacrament in particular; and yet, like other sacraments, the better part of “dignity” prescribes a role for an instrumental power. “There is in the words of the form of this sacrament a created power which causes the change to be wrought in it,” writes Aquinas. The words are, however, “uttered in the person of Christ,” that is, at his “command.” The priest’s word thus functions analogously to Christ’s hand that healed the leper: it is employed by Christ as “principal agent” of the action.

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804 78, 3 ad 2. Cf. similarly 78, 3 ad 7: “sicut dictum est, sanguis seorsum consecratus a corpore expressius repraesentat passionem Christi. Et ideo in consecratione sanguinis fit mentio de passione Christi et fructu ipsius, potius quam in consecratione corporis.” The English Dominican translation reverses Thomas’s point in objection 7 which suggests that “mention ought not be made of Christ’s passion and its fruit in the form of the consecration of the blood any more than in the form of the consecration of the body” (Non ergo magis debuit in forma consecrationis sanguinis fieri mentio de passione Christi et de eius fructu, quam in forma consecrationis corporis); and they mistranslate ad 7 which states that “the blood consecrated apart represents Christ’s passion more expressively.” On both counts, the Blackfriars translation is more reliable. Thomas first stated the point in the first of the three reasons given at 76, 2 ad 1.

805 78, 4 sc. For previous quotations of Ambrose, see note 792, above.

806 78, 4 c. Cf. esp. the careful argument of III 62, 4.

807 Ibid.

808 78, 4 ad 2.
The point is simple, and serves as a segue into Thomas’s equally simple conclusion of both question 78 and the preceding four questions. To repeat the thesis, the sentence *Hoc est corpus meum*, “pronounced in the person of Christ, who says of himself, ‘I am the truth’ (Jn 14.6),” epitomizes the similarity and the difference between this sacrament and others.\(^{809}\) Here as elsewhere, “the word is added to the element, and this becomes a sacrament.”\(^{810}\) But the word in this case is comparable to “the concept of the practical intellect,” which “does not presuppose the thing signified but makes it,” whereas “the concept of the speculative intellect is drawn from things.” Thus God’s word *makes* “what was contained under those species, and was formerly bread, to be the body of Christ,”\(^{811}\) and the faithful know this in accordance with “the rite of the Church.” For “as soon as the words of consecration of the bread have been uttered, the consecrated host is shown to the people to be adored. But this would not be done if Christ’s body were not there, for that would be an act of idolatry.”\(^{812}\)

### III. *Ite, missa est*: Effects of the ordering cause (QQ. 79-83)

Questions 79-83 return to the practical “end” of the Eucharist described *in nuce* in question 73 and presumed in questions 74-78: conformity to Christ the creative and

\(^{809}\) 78, 5 sc.

\(^{810}\) 78, 5 c: “dicit enim Augustinus, super Jn: *accedit verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum.*”


\(^{812}\) 78, 6 c and sc.
incarnate Word, incorporating a purifying experience of his passion.\textsuperscript{813} This, as Thomas argues in question 79, is the effect of the Eucharist for those who approach it with the proper disposition, and all that pertains to its use and administration (questions 80-82) may be related to this point. Finally, Thomas completes the argument by studying the Church’s eucharistic ritual (question 83), through and by which God especially orders human sanctification and the faithful obediently respond.

\textit{Question 79}

As recorded at John 6.51, the Lord says: “The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world,” revealing the unity of substance and purpose in the Eucharist.\textsuperscript{814} Christ is at once “contained in this sacrament” and its purveyor, so that its “effect” should be understood “first of all and principally” with reference to he who came visibly into the world to “bestow the life of grace,” according to John 1.17: “grace and truth came (\textit{facta est}) through Jesus Christ,” who also comes sacramentally into human beings to “cause” the same “life of grace,” according to his statement at John 6.57: “whoever eats me will live because of me.”\textsuperscript{815} Of this continuity of divine action, Cyril says on Luke 22.19 (“this is my body, which is given for you”) that “God’s life-giving Word, by uniting himself with his own flesh, made it to be productive of life. For it was becoming that he

\textsuperscript{813} See especially 73, 3 c and 74, 2 c for \textit{end} used in this way; also 63, 6 c (note 705, above).

\textsuperscript{814} 79, 1 sc.

\textsuperscript{815} 79, 1 c. Cf. similarly the earlier sentence of John 6.51, quoted at 79, 2 sc: “\textit{si quis manducaverit ex hoc pane, vivet in aeternum}. Sed vita aeterna est vita gloriae. Ergo effectus huius sacramenti est adeptio gloriae.”
should be united somehow with bodies through his sacred flesh and precious blood, which we receive in a life-giving blessing in the bread and wine.” In this way, the Eucharist stands as an emblem for the whole of Christ the Word’s career, including his passion, which this sacrament “represents,” as if the faithful were drinking “from Christ’s own side,” in Chrysostom’s words on John 19.34. And “the Lord himself says: ‘This is my blood..., which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins’” (Mt 26.28).\footnote{Ibid.}

“Christ and his passion” are thus simply “the cause of grace” in the Eucharist, and other effects of the sacrament—the spiritual refreshment of the faithful and increase in charity—follow as the fruit of the sacrifice.\footnote{Ibid.} Accordingly, the particular “delight” of the sacrament is bound to the vicissitudes of Christ’s body, which, “when we desire, he lets us feel, and eat, and embrace,” as Chrysostom taught,\footnote{Ibid.} a point that pertains to the sacramental experience of God. For the sacrament “perfects” human beings by uniting them to God,\footnote{79, 1 ad 1.} the result of which is not only a bestowal of “the habit of grace and of virtue” but a stirring to action, according to II Corinthians 5.14: “The charity of Christ presses us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died.” While “the soul is spiritually nourished through the power of this sacrament,” therefore—“gladdened” and “inebriated with the sweetness of the divine goodness, according to

\footnote{Ibid. On the particular representation of Christ’s passion by his blood, see again 76, 2 ad 1 and 78, 3 ad 2 (note 804, above). Cf. the further quotation of this part of the sacramental form at 79, 2 c.}

\footnote{Ibid., at the end. Cf. similarly 79, 2 c: “in hoc sacramento potest considerari et id ex quo habet effectum, scilicet ipse Christus contentus, et passio eius reprehensata; et id per quod habet effectum, scilicet usus sacramenti et species eius.”}

\footnote{Ibid.}

\footnote{79, 1 ad 1.}
Song of Songs 5.1: ‘Eat, O friends, and drink, and be inebriated, my dearly beloved’—at the same time “the effect of grace flows into the body from the soul as we present ‘our members as instruments of justice to God’ (Rom 6.13),” with a view to the “incorruption and glory” of life to come. Or, in other words, reminiscent of the Dionysian “suffering divine things”:

just as Christ’s passion, on the strength of which this sacrament is accomplished, is indeed the sufficient cause of glory, yet not so that we are thereby forthwith admitted to glory but must first “suffer with (compatiamur) him in order that we may also be glorified with him” afterward (Rom 8.17), so this sacrament does not at once admit us to glory, but bestows on us the power of coming to glory.

In the context of this sacramental ascesis of accompanying Christ, whereby the body and soul of the communicant are ordered to experience the grace of Christ’s passion, Thomas’s emphasis upon proper disposition as a condition of worthy reception makes sense. The point already appeared at 75, 1 ad 4 with reference to Augustine’s 27th tractate on John, and now Thomas quotes the 26th tractate: that those who eat spiritually, “bringing innocence to the altar,” “secure the effect” of the sacrament, while many others “by receiving die.” As St Paul taught, “all who eat and drink unworthily eat and drink judgment against themselves” (I Cor 11.29), upon which the Gloss comments that one receives unworthily “in the state of sin” or by handling the sacrament “irreverently,” with

820 79, 1 ad 2.
821 79, 1 ad 3.
822 79, 2 ad 1.
823 79, 2 ad 2. Thomas quotes from this tractate (on John 6.41-59) five other times in question 79: at 1 c, 2 c, 4 obj 1, 6 c, and 8 obj 1.

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the result that more sin, not forgiveness, follows upon reception. Thomas’s argument for the remainder of the question unfolds from this fact in three stages.

1. The power of the sacrament to forgive sins proceeds from Christ’s passion, which is “the fount and cause” of forgiveness. The communicant has a secondary or instrumental role to play, however, in terms of not erecting “an obstacle to receiving the effect” of the sacrament, namely, a conscious mortal sin. As the latter stipulation suggests, there are exceptions to the rule; the effect of the Eucharist may be received not only by desire but also if one is not conscious of one’s mortal sin and has “no attachment” to it, whence, “by approaching the sacrament devoutly and reverently,” one may “obtain the grace of charity, which will perfect one’s contrition and bring forgiveness of sin.” We therefore rightly pray in the postcommunion collect that “this sacrament may be a cleansing from crimes,” according to Psalm 18.13: “Lord, cleanse me from my hidden sins.”

2. From this particular instance of sin forgiven by God and concomitant human striving to avoid and otherwise duly repent of sin, a fundamental dynamic of the “effects” of the Eucharist may be adduced that is analyzable in terms of sacrifice and sacrament, as the Eucharist is, by turns, “offered up” and “received.” In each case, the primacy of divine action cooperates with a subsequent human response, the relativity of which affects the final “effect.” As sacrament, “the power of the sacrament produces directly the

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824 79, 3 sc.
825 79, 3 c.
826 79, 3 obj 1 and ad 1.
effect for which it was instituted,” namely, “union between Christ and his members.”
This union is, however, “made through charity, from the fervor of which follows
forgiveness..., not indeed of the entire punishment, but according to the measure of one’s
devotion.” Likewise as sacrifice, the Eucharist has a power “of its own quantity to satisfy
for all punishment, yet it becomes satisfactory for those for whom it is offered, or even
for the offerers, according to the measure of their devotion and not for the whole
punishment”—as the widow who, with “two small coins, ... put in more than all of them”:
she gave not out of her abundance, but “all she had to live on” (Lk 21.2-4).827

3. The Eucharist is both sacrament and sacrifice, therefore, as Christ’s blood is
shed “‘for you’ (Lk 22.20), that is, who receive it, ‘and for many,’” that is others, ‘for the
forgiveness of sins’ (Mt 26.28).” Thomas cites these words of Christ as the normative and
effective precedent for the prayer of the priest in the canon of the mass: that the Lord “be
mindful” of his servants, men and women, “for whom we offer, or who themselves offer,
to you this sacrifice of praise... for the redemption of their souls, for the hope of their
salvation and safety.”828 In this way Thomas emphasizes again the primacy of divine
action in the sacrament, that the very words of the mass bespeak the ascetical end of the
sacramental Word, namely, “conformity” to his “passion through faith and charity.”
Indeed, “in the canon of the mass no prayer is made for them who are outside the pale of
the Church.”829 In this way also—by prayer—the Eucharist is both sacrificial, as it

827 79, 5 c.
828 79, 7 c.
829 79, 7 ad 2.
“represents” the passion “whereby Christ ‘offered himself a victim to God’ (Eph 5.2),” and sacramental, as it bestows “invisible grace.” Thomas will devote the whole of question 83, the last question on the Eucharist in the Summa, to developing this point, by referring every detail of the rite, especially verbal details, to a theological origin. Christ’s gracious gift of himself is also the obedient response of the faithful, an earnest to abide with him by making the reception and offering of his passion their own.

Questions 80-82

Questions 80-82 may be read as a review of the foregoing teaching—(i) Christ’s effective word in the Eucharist, (ii) as the necessary but insufficient condition for the response of the faithful—that sets up the denouement of question 83.

1. The Eucharist subsists in Christ’s word as an ordering cause: “The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life” (Jn 6.63). That is, Thomas explains, “the sacrament is accomplished by the creator’s word and by the power of the Holy Spirit,” the latter coming “not through the priest’s merits, but through the power of Christ, whose word the priest utters.” For this reason Christ fittingly received his own body and blood at the Last Supper as “the first to fulfill what he required of others to observe,” just as he “willed first to be baptized when imposing Baptism upon others, as we read in Acts

830 79, 7 c.
831 80, 1 obj 1.
832 82, 5 sc (quoting Paschasius, De corpore domini) and 82, 5 ad 2 (quoting Pope Gelasius I, Ep. ad Elphid.; cf. Decret. I, q. 1).
1.1: “Jesus began to do and to teach.”

And while “grace was not increased” in him by his reception of the sacrament, as it is in the faithful, he did experience the other effect of the sacrament, namely, “a certain spiritual delectation,” on account of its institution, as he himself said: “With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you” (Lk 22.15).

Christ’s example thus precedes his command to the disciples, in a word reiterated by the “precept” of the Church: “Do this in memory of me” (Lk 22.19).

And again: “he that eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him” (Jn 6.56), on the basis of which our Lord teaches us to pray: “Give us this day our daily bread,” the Eucharist being “spiritual food” which “it is a good thing to receive every day.”

2. No one, however, deserves to share the Eucharist with Christ, as the centurion in Matthew 8 recognized: “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof.”

A reverential or filial fear of God in this sacrament is therefore appropriate, arising at once from love and humility; and on this account all of the faithful ought not be instructed to receive daily, for each must do what he thinks necessary, as Augustine taught. At the same time, “love and hope, which the Scriptures constantly urge, are preferable to fear. Hence, when Peter said: ‘Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man,’

833 81, 1 c.
834 81, 1 ad 3.
835 80, 11 c. Cf. 80, 11 ad 1: “non potest esse laudabilis humilitas si contra praeceptum Christi et Ecclesiae aliquid qui a communione abstineat.”
836 80, 2 obj 3, quoting Augustine, De verbis domini (= Sermon 142). Cf. 75, 1 c.
837 80, 10 ad 1. Cf. 80, 10 ad 2 and 4.
838 80, 10 obj 3.
Jesus answered: ‘Fear not’ (Lk 5.8). This comforting word explicates the sacramental experience of Christ’s sacrifice by the faithful amid the turbulence of history, according to the Lord’s promise that “iniquity will abound and charity grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved” (Mt 24.12-13). The faithful endure to the end eucharistically when they are able to “partake of its effect” by eating not only sacramentally but spiritually; when, in other words, they avoid “eating and drinking unworthily” (I Cor 11.29)—either eating in sin or handling the consecrated species irreverently. As already indicated in III 73, therefore, spiritual eating is necessary for all members of Christ’s body, at least in terms of a desire to receive the sacrament, in light of the stricture of John 6.54: those who do not “eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood” will not “have life” in them. In this sense, while one is indeed “made a

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839 80, 10 ad 3, quoting Ep. 54.

840 80, 10 ad 5, near the end of Thomas’s review of the frequency of communion in “various ages of the Church”: “In the primitive Church, when the devotion of the Christian faith was more flourishing, it was enacted that the faithful should communicate daily: hence Pope Anaclete says (Ep. i): ‘When the consecration is finished, let all communicate who do not wish to cut themselves off from the Church; for so the apostles have ordained, and the holy Roman Church holds.’ Later on, when the fervor of faith relaxed, Pope Fabian (Third Council of Tours, Canon 1) gave permission ‘that all should communicate, if not more frequently, at least three times in the year, namely, at Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas.’ Pope Soter likewise (Second Council of Chalon, Canon xlvii) declares that Communion should be received ‘on Holy Thursday,’ as is set forth in the Decretals (De Consecratione, dist. 2). Later on, when ‘iniquity abounded and charity grew cold’ (Mt 24.12), Pope Innocent III commanded that the faithful should communicate ‘at least once a year,’ namely, ‘at Easter.’ However, in De Eccles. Dogmat. xxiii, the faithful are counseled ‘to communicate on all Sundays.’”

841 80, 1 c.

842 80, 4 sc: “apostolus dicit, I Cor 11: qui manducat et bibit indigne, iudicium sibi manducat et bibit. Dicit autem Glossa ibidem: indigne manducat et bibit qui in crimine est, vel irreverenter tractat,” a verbatim repetition of 79, 3 sc. For further citations and/or quotations of I Corinthians 11.29 in the questions immediately at hand, see 80, 1 sc; 80, 5, esp. ad 2; 81, 2 obj 3.

843 80, 11 sc and c. Cf. 73, 3 ad 1 where other instances of the point are mentioned.
member of Christ’s body in Baptism,” both Baptism and the Eucharist are requisite for adults.\footnote{844}

Given the consistent emphasis upon the sanctifying effect of the Eucharist, it is not surprising to find here as well a consistency of Dionysian reference, Thomas’s principal patristic touchstone for the ascetical end of sacramental experience of God. Dionysius is first adduced in question 80 with reference to Baptism as a condition for being “allowed even to see” the Eucharist, hence all the more for a share in the eating of it.\footnote{845} More significant, however, is Thomas’s discussion of the holiness of ordained ministers in question 82. Of course, just as “the power of receiving” the Eucharist “is conceded by Christ to the baptized person, so likewise the power of consecrating this sacrament on Christ’s behalf is bestowed upon the priest at his ordination: for thereby he is put upon a level with them to whom the Lord said: ‘Do this in memory of me’ (Lk 22.19).”\footnote{846} The sacrament is in this way surely “accomplished by the creator’s word,” irrespective of the priest’s sinfulness.\footnote{847} Because, however, as Dionysius says, the ordained share in a certain “power of enlightening” and “perfective dispensing” in the sacramental celebration,\footnote{848} these are properly outward signs of the “inner sacrifice”

\footnote{844} 80, 9 ad 3 (quoting again, as at 73, 3 ad 1, Ad Bonifacium [= Pseudo-Beda, In I Cor 10.17]) and 80, 11 ad 2.

\footnote{845} 80, 4 ad 4, citing Eccles. Hier. See citations of Dionysius on this same point at 80, 9 obj 2 and ad 2, and ad 3. Cf. 81, 2 c for Dionysius and Augustine on the question of Judas having “received our Lord’s body and blood with the other disciples” at the Last Supper.

\footnote{846} 82, 1 c.

\footnote{847} Again, 82, 5 sc (note 832); see 82, 5 ad 1.

\footnote{848} 82, 3 ad 3, quoting Eccl. Hier. 3.
whereby priests offer themselves to God, as Augustine taught.\footnote{82, 4 c, citing \textit{De civ. Dei} 10.} Thus priests not only “dispense divine things” but “partake” of them, explains Dionysius, in agreement with I Corinthians 10.18: “Are not those who eat the sacrifices partakers of the altar?”\footnote{Ibid., citing \textit{Eccl. Hier.} 3.} Indeed, “everyone is bound to use the grace entrusted to him when opportunity serves, according to II Corinthians 6.1: ‘We exhort you that you receive not the grace of God in vain.’”\footnote{82, 10 c.} Thus “righteous” laypeople also have a “spiritual priesthood for offering spiritual sacrifices” according to Psalm 1.19: “A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit,” Romans 12.1: “Present your bodies a living sacrifice,” and I Peter 2.5: “A holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifice.”\footnote{82, 1 ad 2.} The holiness of the priest should therefore be of especial concern to the priest himself, concludes Dionysius in an austere passage,\footnote{82, 5 obj 3: “Dionysius dicit, in epistola 8 ad Demophilum monachum: \textit{perfecte cecidit a sacerdotali ordine qui non est illuminatus, et audax quidem mihi videtur talis, sacerdotalibus manum apponens; et audet immundas infamias, non enim dicam orationes, super divina symbola Christiformiter enuntiare.”} the rhetorical vividness of which Thomas imitates: if the priest “acts unworthily,” his “blessing” will not only deserve a “curse” but in fact be judged by God “an infamy and a blasphemy, and not a prayer,” notwithstanding its “holy efficacy” for the faithful “inasmuch as it is pronounced in the person of Christ.” For “the same action can be evil, inasmuch as it is done with a bad intention of the servant, and good from the good intention of the master.”\footnote{82, 5 ad 3. Cf. 82, 6 obj 2 and ad 2.}
Aquinas begins his examination of the rite of the Eucharist by reviewing the theological foundation and purpose of the liturgy, namely, its sacrificial representation of Christ’s passion to the end of human participation in its fruit. As already argued at III 79, 1 on the bestowal of grace as an “effect,” the Eucharist “represents” Christ’s passion according to his own testimony at the Last Supper. And on this same account, as at III 75, 1, the sacrament is an “image” of the original, to such an extent that it remains Christ’s own, as Ambrose recognized, commenting on Hebrews 10.1: “In Christ was offered up a sacrifice capable of giving eternal salvation.” Of course, Christ as Word is “the very image of the things to come,” beyond the “shadow” of the old law (Heb 10.1). He “abolishes the first in order to establish the second” (Heb 10.9), however, according to his prayer to the Father in the psalm: “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me.... Then I said, ‘See, God, I have come to do your will’” (Heb 10.5, 7 = Ps 40.6-7), that is, “I propose to come to the passion,” as Thomas paraphrases this verse, cross-referencing I John 5.6: “This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ.” Moreover, when Christ says “in the scroll [or “head”] of the book

855 83, 1 c.

856 In Heb 1.2-3 (note 751, above).

857 In Heb 10.7, n. 489: “Deinde cum dicit tunc dixi, etc., prosequitur de approbatione novi testamenti, et secundum Glossam sic legitur: tunc, scilicet quando aptasti corpus mihi, scilicet in conceptione, dixi: ecce venio, id est, venire proposui, scilicet ad passionem. I Jn 5.6: hic est qui venit per aquam et sanguinem Iesu Christus.” “Or better,” Aquinas continues, “this refers to his coming into the world thus: Then, namely, when the holocausts did not please you, I said: I come through the Incarnation. John 16.28: ‘I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world’ in order to offer myself for the passion. And so he says: See” (ibid.: Vel melius est quod referatur ad adventum in mundum sic: tunc,
it is written of me” (Heb 10.7 = Ps 40.7), the “book itself is Christ according to his human nature, in which are written all the things necessary for human salvation,” explains Aquinas.858 It is thus “true to say,” Thomas continues in question 83, “that Christ was sacrificed even in the figures of the Old Testament; it is stated in the Apocalypse that all ‘whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb that was slain from the beginning of the world’” will worship the Antichrist (Rev 13.8). And Christ’s passion is effective for us because “by this sacrament we are made partakers” of it, according to the “secret prayer” for the ninth Sunday after Pentecost: “Whenever the commemoration of this sacrifice is celebrated, the work of our redemption is enacted.”859

Both parts of the sacramental celebration—its representation and participation—thus determine its suitable time, as well as its proper place and the sacred vessels to be used, following the maxim that “the Church’s ordinances are Christ’s own ordinances, since he said: ‘Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them’” (Mt 18.20).”860 In this way, again, Christ’s word may be seen to bear a

858 Ibid., n. 490: “in capite libri scriptum est de me. Iste liber est Christus secundum humanam naturam, in quo scripta sunt omnia necessaria homini ad salutem.”

859 83, 1 c.

860 83, 3 sc. On representation and participation, see 83, 2 c: “sicut dictum est, in celebratione huius mysterii attenditur et repraesentatio dominicae passionis, et participatio fructus eius. Et secundum utrumque oportuit determinare tempus aptum celebrationi huius sacramenti,” and 83, 3 c: “in his quae
singular fruit for the faithful in his passion. Of course, the Lord authorized daily
celebration of the Eucharist when he taught his disciples to pray (Lk 11); and as a rule
mass ought not be said at night “because Christ is present in this sacrament who says ‘I
must work the works of he who sent me while it is day’ (Jn 9.4).” More particularly,
however, because

Christ wished to give this sacrament last of all, in order that it might make
a deeper impression on the hearts of the disciples, ...we celebrate at the
hour when our Lord suffered; that is, either, as on feast days, at the hour of
Terce, when he was crucified by the tongues of the Jews (Mk 15.25), and
when the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples (Acts 2.15); or, as
when no feast is kept, at the hour of Sext, when he was crucified at the
hands of the soldiers (Jn 19.14); or, as on fasting days, at None, when
“crying out with a loud voice he gave up his spirit” (Mt 27.46, 50).862

Likewise, those things which will be used in the celebration are properly consecrated in
order to “show our reverence for the sacrament, and in order to represent the holiness
which is the effect of the passion of Christ, according to Hebrews 13.12: ‘Jesus, that he
might sanctify the people by his own blood, suffered without the gate.’”863 Or, as we read
earlier in the same letter: “by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are
sanctified” (Heb 10.14).864 “And the Holy Spirit also testifies” to this, the writer

861 83, 2 c and ad 4.
862 83, 2 ad 3.
863 83, 3 c: “consecrationes adhibentur his rebus quae veniunt in usum huius sacramenti, tum
propter reverentiam sacramenti; tum ad repraesentandum effectum sanctitatis qui ex passione Christi
provenit, secundum illud Heb ult. [in obj 1]: Iesus, ut sanctificaret per suum sanguinem populum, et
cetera.” Cf. similarly 83, 3 ad 2: “Through him we offer a sacrifice of praise to God” (Heb 13.15).
864 Thomas connects the two verses at In Heb 10.14, n. 499: “Et ideo dicit quod una oblatione
consummavit, id est, perfecit, quod fecit reconciliando et coniungendo nos Deo tamquam principio,
continues (10.15), quoting Jeremiah 31 for the second time in the space of several chapters (Heb 10.16-17; cf. 8.8, 10). For “the days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah...: I will put my laws in their minds, and write them on their hearts” (Jer 31.31, 33). God promises here, Thomas reflects, to teach the faithful in an exterior and an interior manner, both of which are figured in the Old Testament and consummated in the New, though the interior instruction also completes the exterior. Human beings understand words cognitively, for instance, according to Psalm 105.8: “the word which he commanded to a thousand generations,” but God himself inspires understanding (see Job 32.8); whence the New Testament is infused with the instruction of the Holy Spirit.865 Moreover, knowledge alone is insufficient without accompanying action, a fact that accounts for the trinitarian pedagogy of the New Testament, oriented around an incarnational center. For God

  first illumines the intellect to know. Therefore he says: “I will put my laws in their minds” (Heb 8.10 = Jer 31.33), etc.; and he says it in the plural, on account of the diverse precepts and counsels. This is what the Holy Spirit does: “as his unction teaches you about all things” (I Jn 2.27); “He will teach you all things” (Jn 14.26). Likewise, he inclines the affections to act

865 In Heb 8.10, n. 404: “Modus autem tradendi duplex est. Unus per exteriora, sicut proponendo verba ad cognitionem alciuius. Et hoc potest homo facere, et sic traditum fuit vetus testamentum. Alio modo interius operando. Et hoc proprium est Dei. Job 32.8: inspiratio omnipotentis dat intelligentiam. Et hoc modo datum est novum testamentum, quia consistit in infusione spiritus sancti, qui interius instruit” in light of In Heb 8.9, n. 401: “Ps 104.8 s.: menor fuit in saeculum testamenti sui verbi quod mandavit in mille generationes.” The movement back to In Heb 8 is justified here by Aquinas’s own recognition at In Heb 10.15, n. 500 that the writer is again depending upon Jeremiah 31.33: “Deinde cum dicit contestatur autem, confirmat quod dixerat per auctoritatem, quae sumpta est ex Jer 31.33, quae, quia supra cap. octavo exposita est, ad praesens intermittitur.” Cf. 78, 3 obj 3.

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well, whereby he is impressed upon the heart. On this account he says
“and write them on their hearts” (Heb 8.10 = Jer 31.33), that is, upon their
cognition I will inscribe charity. “Above all these things have charity”
(Col 3.14); “the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts” (Rom 5.5).
This is the “epistle [of Christ]” of which he adds: “written not with ink,
but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets
of human hearts” (II Cor 3.3).866

In this perspective, that “all shall know” the Lord without being “taught” by one
another (Heb 8.11 = Jer 31.34) may be understood with reference to Christ’s “immediate”
instruction of the apostles, when he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures
“perfectly” by an “infused wisdom” (see Lk 24.45; cf. 24.27, 32).867 To be sure, human
beings will and do teach one another about “mysterious” things, as Dionysius recognized,
“even unto the end of the world, while the execution of the effects of God perdures.”
Sanctifying “knowledge of divinity,” however, must be taught immediately by God,
according to Psalm 36.9: “In your light we see light.”868 For instance, returning to
question 83, while the Church’s ministers properly serve as the “ministers of Christ and

866 In Heb 8.10, n. 404: “Non autem sufficit tantum cognoscere, sed requiritur operari. Et ideo
primo illuminat intellectum ad cognoscendum. Et ideo dicit dabo leges meas, et cetera. Et dicit in plurali,
propter diversa praecepta et consilia. Et hoc facit spiritus sanctus. I Jn 2.27: unctio eius docet vos. Jn 14.26:
ille vos docebit omnia, et cetera. Item ad bene operandum inclinat affectum, unde imprimitur cordi. Et
quantum ad hoc dicit in corde eorum superscribam eas, id est, super cognitionem scribam charitatem.
Super omnia autem charitatem habete, etc., Col 3.14, et Rom 5.5: charitas Dei diffusa est in cordibus
nostris, et cetera. Et haec est epistola, de qua subdit, II Cor 3.3: non atramento, sed spiritu Dei vivi; non in
tabulis lapideis, sed in tabulis cordis carnalibus.”

867 In Heb 8.11, n. 408: “apostolis, qui immediate fuerunt instructi a Deo, quando aperuit illis
sensum, ut intelligenter Scripturas. Lk ult. Apostoli ergo facti sunt perfecte cognoscentes, et non ab aliis
instructi, sed simul a Christo acceperunt sapientiam infusam.”

868 Ibid., n. 409: “Dionysium unus Angelus docet alium illuminando ipsum: ergo et homo beatus
alium docebit. Respondeo. Dicendum est quod duplex est cognitio in beatis Angelis. Una quae beatos facit,
scilicet cognitio divinitatis, quae sola beatos facit.... Alia est quae est omnium quae sunt aliiud a Deo,
cuiusmodi sunt effectus Dei, et ista non beatificant. Quantum ergo ad primam unus non docet alium; quia
unus non beatificaturn mediante alio, sed a Deo immediate. Ps 35.9: in lumine tuo videbimus lumen. Sed
quantum ad aliam, quae est aliquorum mysteriorum, unus docet alium. Et hoc forte usque ad finem mundi,
quamdiu durat executio effectuum Dei.”
the dispensers of the mysteries of God” (I Cor 4.1), Christ’s own words are “sufficient for confecting” the Eucharist. Here we already “see him as he is” (I Jn 3.2)—looking at and touching with our hands “the word of life” (I Jn 1.1)—according to Jesus’ declamation to the Father: “This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (Jn 17.3).

The words spoken in this sacrament are therefore surely framed properly, argues Aquinas in article 4, the centerpiece of question 83, because of course they are compounded in a hierarchy of verbal signs, beginning with Christ’s own consecratory words but adding others “to dispose the people” to receive aright. The principle goes back to the foundation of III 60, 3 and 6: human sanctification is at once wrought by God as ordering cause and by the imitative response of the faithful who participate in their own transformation. This is the case in the Eucharist above all, Thomas notes again; “because the whole mystery of our salvation is comprised in this sacrament,” an extraordinary fact of divine action, “it is performed with greater solemnity than the other sacraments.”

The four parts of the mass—preparation, instruction, celebration of the sacrament, and thanksgiving—may be analyzed in terms of this duality, with the usual

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869 3, obj 8. Cf. ad 8: “dispensatio sacramentorum pertinet ad ministros Ecclesiae, sed consecratio eorum est ab ipso Deo.”


871 83, 4 ad 1: “consecratio solis verbis Christi conficitur. Alia vero necesse fuit addere ad praeparationem populi sumentis, ut dictum est.”

872 See note 701, above.

873 83, 4 c.
attention given to the mediating layers of scriptural and liturgical words as tokens of the experience by the faithful of conformity to the crucified Word.\textsuperscript{874}

1. In accordance with Sirach 18.23: “before prayer, prepare your soul,” the faithful prepare themselves to celebrate this mystery “worthily.” This is done first of all in the divine praise of the Introit which often consists in the words of a psalm, “or at least it is sung with a psalm,” on account of God’s own promise that “the sacrifice of praise shall glorify me; and this is the way by which I will show them the salvation of God” (Ps 50.23). Indeed, “the psalms comprise by way of praise whatever is contained in sacred Scripture,” wrote Dionysius. Second, in the same spirit, the faithful pray for mercy according to a trinitarian pattern, saying three times each “Lord have mercy” for the person of the Father, “Christ have mercy” for the Son, and “Lord have mercy” for the Holy Spirit, which also serves as a petition “against the threefold misery of ignorance, 

\textsuperscript{874} Aquinas here studies not only the “canon of the mass” per se, as he called it at 78, 1 ad 4, but the whole of the Sunday liturgy, only one particular piece of which is “the substance of the form” (78, 1 ad 2), which in the case of the bread is simply the words of consecration: “This is my body.” The case of the wine is more complicated, according to 78, 3 c: “the substance of the form” is the whole of it (cf. obj 1 for the entire form); but the consecratory words, “This is the chalice of my blood,” effect the transformation. The distinction is important in part because it underlines Thomas’s own pedagogical emphasis at this stage of his discussion of the sacrament, namely, that in light of the miracle of transubstantiation, marking the singularity of the Eucharist, we have all the more reason to focus on the sanctification of the faithful in and after Christ as its end. It is worth noting here as well that Thomas knew about and accepted inevitable liturgical variation in the Church, both on account of change over time and geography. Commenting on the canon of the mass, for instance, he notes at 78, 1 ad 4 that it “is not the same in all places or times” as “various portions have been introduced by various people.” And, again, 74, 4 c reflects on the licit variance of rites in the “Latin” and “Greek” churches, whence “sicut peccat sacerdos in Ecclesia Latinorum celebrans de pane fermentato, ita peccaret presbyter Graecus in Ecclesia Graecorum celebrans de azymo pane, quasi pervertens Ecclesiae suae ritum.” In the same place, after having suggested why the Latin “custom of celebrating with unleavened bread is more reasonable,” Thomas adds at the end that the Greek custom is nonetheless “not unreasonable, both on account of its significatio, to which Gregory refers, and in detestation of the heresy of the Nazarenes who mixed up legal observances with the gospel.” Cf. Yves Congar, “Saint Thomas Aquinas and the Spirit of Ecumenism,” New Blackfriars, 55/648 (1974): 196-209; J.-M. R. Tillard, “Le marque de Thomas d’Aquin sur le dialogue oecuménique,” Ordo sapientiae et amoris. Image et message de saint Thomas d’Aquin à travers les récentes études historiques, herméneutiques et doctrinales, ed. C.-J. Pinto de Oliveira (Studia friburgensia n. s. 78; Fribourg, 1993).
sin, and punishment.” Third, the words of the Gloria, “Glory be to God on high,” are sung on festival days to “commemorate the heavenly glory toward which, after the present misery, we are tending.” Finally, the priest prays for the people, “that they may be made worthy of such mysteries.”

2. Next the faithful are instructed, in several stages. First, the lectors and subdeacons “read aloud in the church the doctrine of the prophets and apostles.” This is followed by the singing of the Gradual which signifies “progress in life,” and either the Alleluia which signifies “spiritual joy” or, in mournful offices, the Tract which signifies “spiritual sighing,” all of which properly follow from the preceding teaching. Next, “the people are instructed perfectly by Christ’s doctrine contained in the Gospel, which is read by the higher ministers, namely, the deacons.” And because we believe Christ’s own word about himself—that he is “the divine truth, according to John 8.46: ‘If I tell you the truth, why do you not believe me?’”—after the Gospel is read the “symbol of faith” is sung in which the people demonstrate their “assent by faith to Christ’s doctrine.”

3. Having been prepared and instructed, the people are ready “to proceed to the celebration of the mystery,” which is first a sacrifice offered and then a sacrament consecrated and received. In terms of sacrifice, the people raise their joyful voice of offering at the Offertory, and the priest prays that their oblation may “be made acceptable to God,” just as David said: “In the simplicity of my heart, I have... offered all these things; and I have seen with great joy your people, who are here present, offer you their

875 Ibid., quoting Eccles. Hier. 3.
876 Ibid.
offerings,” and then prayed: “O LORD..., keep forever such purposes and thoughts in the hearts of your people and direct their hearts toward you” (I Chron 29.17-18). Before proceeding to the consecration, which is “performed by supernatural power, the people are first of all excited to devotion in the Preface, when they are admonished ‘to lift up their hearts to the Lord,’” after which follows “devout praise of Christ’s divinity, saying with the angels: ‘Holy, holy, holy,’” and likewise praise of “his humanity, saying with the children: ‘Blessed is he who comes.’” Next, the priest commemorates those “for whom this sacrifice is offered” and also the saints, “imploring their patronage,” before concluding with a petitionary prayer that this “oblation” may be salutary. At the consecration itself, the priest asks first of all for its effect when he says: “Which oblation do you, O God.” Second, he performs the consecration using our savior’s words when he says: “Who the day before,” etc. Third, he excuses his presumption in obeying Christ’s command when he says: “Wherefore calling to mind.” Fourth, he asks that the sacrifice accomplished may be acceptable to God when he says: “Look down upon them with a propitious,” etc. Fifth, he prays for the effect of this sacrifice and sacrament—for the partakers when he says: “We humbly beseech you,” for the dead when he says: “Be mindful also, O Lord,” etc., and especially for the priests making the offering when he says: “And to us sinners,” etc.877

Finally, the people are prepared to receive the sacrament “by the common prayer of the congregation, which is the Lord’s prayer,” by the priest’s own private prayer especially for the people, when he says: “Deliver us, we beseech you, O Lord,” and by the Peace, which is given saying “Lamb of God.” Then follows the reception of the sacrament, first

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by the priest and then by others, because, as Dionysius says, “he who gives divine things to others ought first to partake of them himself.”

4. The celebration of the mass ends with the Thanksgiving, the people rejoicing in song “for having received the mystery, and the priest offering thanks by prayer, just as Christ, celebrating the supper with his disciples, ‘said a hymn’ (Mt 26.30).”

In this four-staged exegesis of the mass, we see Thomas’s mature sacramental theology of the Word in full flower. First and fundamentally, the synthesis of Scripture and a sacramental theology of the Word of God, well-established in previous questions, stands as the larger theological context in which careful attention to the interrelation of Christ’s and others’ words in the mass makes sense. Thus Thomas frames the article in these terms, which provide the lens for the rest of the article. There is no question, for instance, that the fact that Jesus “said and did many things” provides the warrant for careful attention to the words of the liturgy, even if they were not all recorded in Scripture. In fact, precisely because all that he did was not written down (see Jn 21.25), an adequate liturgical exegesis depends upon attending to other layers, passed on by the Church “from the tradition of the apostles,” the plausability of which additions may however be tested against the scriptural record. Thus, in the celebration of the sacrament, the priest says “lifting up his eyes to heaven,” words that do not appear in the

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878 Ibid., citing Eccles. Hier. 3.
879 Ibid.
881 83, 4 ad 2. Cf. III 60, 4-6 and 64, 2, discussed in the previous chapter.
gospel record of the institution; and yet “it seems reasonable that he who lifted up his eyes to the Father in raising Lazarus to life (Jn 11.41), and in the prayer which he made for the disciples (Jn 17.1), had more reason to do so in instituting this sacrament which is of greater import.”

At another level, the bishop is instructed, as a matter of canon, not to “hinder anyone from entering the Church and hearing the word of God, be they Gentiles, heretics, or Jews,” in which word “is contained the instruction of the faith” concerning this sacrament. Such instruction is vitally important for all the people for whom the sacrament is offered, since it requires a “greater devotion” than the others. As Cyprian wrote, when the priest “disposes the souls of the brothers by saying ‘Lift up your hearts’” and they reply “We have lifted them up to the Lord,” they do well to “remember that they are to think of nothing else but God.” In this way, if all take up their prescribed role with a proper devotion, the whole hierarchy of signification in the mass (including Scripture) “which belongs to the entire Church”—the priest and other ministers, the choir, and the people—may be ordered to the sanctifying effect of the first Word. That is, as Aquinas explains in an extraordinary passage,

some things which refer to the people are sung by the choir... as though inspiring the entire people with them. And there are other words which the priest begins and the people take up, the priest then acting as in the person of God, to show that the things they denote have come to the people through divine revelation, such as faith and heavenly glory.... Other words are uttered by the ministers, such as the doctrine of the Old and New

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882 83, 4 obj 2 and ad 2.
883 83, 4 ad 4, quoting De Consecr., dist. I.
884 83, 4 ad 5.
Testament, as a sign that this doctrine was announced to the peoples through ministers sent by God. And there are other words which the priest alone recites which belong to his personal office, that he may “offer gifts and prayers” for the people (Heb 5.1). Some of these he says aloud, namely, those that are common to priest and people ...; others belong to the priest alone... [and] are said by the priest in secret. Nevertheless, in both he calls the people to attention by saying: “The Lord be with you,” and he waits for them to assent by saying “Amen.”

Second, Thomas once more elaborates the foregoing with the help of Psuedo-Dionysius, in this case *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 3, the Areopagite’s similarly literal unfolding of “the rite of the synaxis.” As Dionysius explains, he is following his “celebrated teacher” Hierotheus who deemed the Eucharist to be “the sacrament of sacraments,” the divine inspiration of which may be discussed “by making use of the lore of Scripture and of hierarchical understanding.” Indeed, “the divine works are the consummation of the divine words,” so that “as one becomes fit to approach these divine things one is given the grace of assimilation with them and of communion with them.” Specifically, one is assimilated to the incarnate Word, whose “sinlessness must be our model so that we may aspire to a godlike and unblemished condition.” On this account, “perfection” is the condition for “truly entering into communion with God and with the divine things;” and, in a pedagogical supplement to the familiar principle of *Divine Names* 2.9 (“*non solum discens sed et patiens divina*”), Dionysius adds: “Whoever

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885 83, 4 ad 6.

886 Psuedo-Dionysius, *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 3.1 (in *The Complete Works* [New York: Paulist, 1987], p. 209). Dionysius unfolds his argument in three stages: an introduction, a brief walk through the rite, and then a more careful and extended, “spiritual” analysis of not only the sacramental effects but their “causes... in the light which Jesus will give us” (3.3.2; p. 212).

887 *Ibid.*, 3.3.5 (p. 214) and 3.3.1 (p. 212).

wrongfully dares to teach holiness to others before he has regularly practiced it himself is unholy and is a stranger to sacred norms.889

Dionysius’s argument could be read as an inspiration for both the Summa’s structure and its constructive program for teacher and student alike. A spiritual or intellectual ascesis properly precedes and norms an examination of the sacred mysteries of the faith, just as the sacramental experience of God by the faithful subsists in conformity to his passion. On both counts, a devout fear of God follows from a realism about the salvific consequences of the Incarnation for those who worthily partake of its blessings.

889 Ibid., 3.3.13-14 (p. 223).
By making Christ as Word the focus of the present study, I have sought to elucidate the most basic theological and rhetorical structure of the *Summa theologiae*, without which claims of christological centrality in the work as a whole remain intuitive and gestural at best. There are two essential points here. First, Aquinas identifies Jesus Christ as Word in the *prima pars* in a series of questions on the Trinity that consolidate and elaborate his earlier claim in the first question that God is the “subject” of the science of sacred doctrine. To speak of the Word is always to have invoked the other divine persons as well; and all that “theology” has to say about creation, the moral life, and redemption proceeds from this singular origin and condition of the discipline: “the word of God” (*sermo de Deo*), in the mode of revelation. Second, therefore, interpretations of the *Summa* that emphasize the diffusion of Christology throughout the work must come to grips with Aquinas’s articulated preference for the name *Word* for the second person of the Trinity. This decision invites a constancy of association of wisdom, for instance, with the Incarnation and passion of the Word, who may be experienced—

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890 Again, I 1, 7 sc: “hac scientia fit sermo de Deo, dicitur enim theologia, quasi sermo de Deo. Ergo Deus est subiectum huius scientiae.”
suffered—by the faithful. The sapiential character of sacred doctrine subsists in this exemplary Word because the words of Scripture, reasoned arguments, and sacramental words are all ordered by his perfect utterance: a curriculum of holiness unto salvation.

I want now to reflect on the potential implications of the present study for two, broad streams of scholarly discussion of the *Summa* (and works contemporaneous with it). First, does the *Summa*, in its several parts, evince a discernible order or plan, and if so, how shall we understand the place of Christology within it? Second, how might a rich understanding of *Word* in the *Summa* change the way that we think about *reason* in Aquinas’s mature thought?

I. The plan of the *Summa*

Any student of the *Summa* must quickly come to grips with its sustainedly trinitarian and christological subject *matter*, borne in the idiom of Scripture: the terms of its arguments and their internal order, beginning and ending in God the Trinity, with all created things related to him. Does this fact also require, however, the conclusion that the *form* or structure of the work is both theological and christological throughout? That Thomas puts off Christology as its own locus until the *tertia pars* seems clear enough; and this, on the face of it, tells against the thesis that the work as a whole is formed or structured by Jesus Christ. Perhaps for this reason, we ought to surmise that the first and second parts of the *Summa* serve as the necessary foundation or preparation for the third; or, alternatively, that they enact a relatively distinct discourse, with different conventions and aims.
Marie-Dominique Chenu, in his classic adduction of a Neoplatonic dynamic of emanation (*exitus*) and return (*reditus*) in the *Summa*, argued for a weak version of the view that the *tertia pars* represents a distinct exercise in theological reasoning from the previous parts.\(^{891}\) As he explained it:

Since theology is the science of God, all things will be studied in their relation to God, whether in their production or in their final end, in their *exitus et reditus*... Such is the plan of the *Summa theologicae*, the movement which it translates: *Ia Pars*—emanation from God, the principle; *IIa Pars*—return to God, the end; and because, *de facto*, by God’s free and utterly gratuitous design (sacred history reveals this to us), this return is effected through Christ, the man-God, a *IIIa Pars* will study the “Christian” conditions of this return.\(^{892}\)

Chenu drew the evidence for his reading especially from I 2 prologue and II prologue as read in light of the general prologue of the work, where Thomas speaks of his intention to arrange his teaching not according to the strictures of one or another genre of commentary or disputation but the very “order of the discipline.”\(^{893}\) In light of this

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\(^{891}\) Chenu, *Toward Understanding St. Thomas*, trans. with corrections and additions by A.-M. Landry and D. Hughes (Chicago: H. Regnery Co., 1964), pp. 304, 306, translating *Introduction à l’étude de saint Thomas d’Aquin* (Paris: Vrin, 1950), and incorporating his influential essay on “Le plan de la Somme théologique de saint Thomas,” *RT* 47 (1939), pp. 93-107. See Chenu’s more developed comment at *ibid.*, p. 311: “All of Greek reason, that of Aristotle and that of Plotinus, is herein adopted within Christian soil, not indeed as an object, nor as a light; the matter, and especially the sap, of theological science’s fine fruits remain intimately Christian. Greek reason is adopted as a tool, a simple tool, yet, an authentically qualified tool because of the coherence of nature and grace.” Chenu carefully noted that he understood himself to be following John of St. Thomas (at *Cursus theologicus* I 191), the devoted 17th Century Spanish Dominican commentator on the *Summa* (*ibid.*, p. 305 n. 9).

\(^{892}\) *Ibid.*, pp. 304-05. Pertinent to our larger argumentative interest in this and following chapters of the present study, Chenu continues: “Plainly, in this third part more than elsewhere in the *Summa*, history will dominate, because here it yields a ‘revelation,’ in the strong sense of the word. Herein also, mind’s speculation will hit upon its true value by moulding itself upon the sweet contingencies of divine love” (p. 305). We will agree with both of these sentences of Chenu’s; though our understanding of their truth must differ from his in several respects, as I will explain immediately below.

\(^{893}\) *ST* general prologue: “ea quae sunt necessaria… ad scendum non traduntur secundum ordinem disciplinae, sed secundum quod requirebat librorum expositio, vel secundum quod se praebebat occasio disputandi.” Cf. Chenu, *op. cit.*, p. 300ff. Torrell renders *secundum ordinem disciplinae* as “according to
announced intention with respect to the plan or “order” of the work, the subsequent prologues take on greater significance. Thus, at I 2, Thomas outlines “the principal intention of this sacred doctrine,” namely, “to hand on knowledge of God... as he is the beginning and end of things.”894 And at II prologue, Thomas resumes: “now that we have treated of the exemplar, namely God and those things that proceed from the divine power according to his will (voluntatem), it remains for us to consider his image, that is, man, insofar as he is also the beginning of his actions, having as it were free will (arbitrium) and power.”

While there have been numerous scholarly appraisals to date of Chenu’s researches, and numerous counter-proposals, all who would postulate one or another unifying “theme” or “structure” or “plan” or “architectonic” in the Summa inevitably return to his original thesis, often in order to build on it.895 Jean-Pierre Torrell recounts this tradition of indebtedness in his own critical appropriation of Chenu. Torrell concurs that “instead of proposing a simple series of questions to be followed without close links to one another,” as, for instance, in the Lombard’s Sentences, Thomas “offers a synthesis

the demands of the subject itself,” and then, several lines later, ordo disciplinae as “order of knowing” (STA II, p. 54). Thomas Gilby, in the Blackfriars translation, renders ordo disciplinae as “a sound educational method” (vol. 1, p. 3), while the English Dominicans translate it more literally as “the order of the subject matter” (vol. 1, p. xix).

894 I 2 proem. Cf. again I 1, 7 c: “Omnia autem tractantur in sacra doctrina sub ratione Dei, vel quia sunt ipse Deus vel quia habent ordinem ad Deum ut ad principium et finem. Unde sequitur quod Deus vere sit subiectum huius scientiae.”

that already generates knowledge by its very emphasis on interconnections and internal coherence." And Torrell agrees that "the central intuition" of an exitus-reditus scheme underlying "the plan of the Summa" is correct; with the proviso that the exitus pattern—which is only arguably present in the Summa, since Thomas no longer explicitly uses the term as he did in the Scriptum—in no way suggests any kind of commitment on Thomas’s part to classic, Neoplatonist emanationism of a necessitarian sort. The sole term in the Summa for the egress of “a free creation, inaugurating time and the history of salvation,” is the Latin processio, which the Jesus of Thomas’s Vulgate uses to describe both his own origin (processi) from God (Jn 8.42) and the Spirit’s origin (procedit) from the Father (Jn 15.26). Thus, as Torrell repeatedly emphasizes, one may discern a “circular movement of creatures” in Thomas’s composition, whereby they “come forth from [God] and are led back toward their origin, now viewed as their final end.”

For purposes of the present study, the greatest gain of Chenu’s research was his broaching of the question of the theological form of the Summa. As he explained, the


897 Ibid., p. 55n.6. Thomas also used the term procession in the Scriptum, however. Cf. similarly on both points Laporte, “Christ in Aquinas’s Summa Theologiae: Peripheral or Pervasive?” Thomist 67 (2003): 221-48, at p. 233. Torrell also notes several times (STA I, p. 153; idem., STA II, p. 53ff.; idem., La Somme de théologie de saint Thomas d’Aquin [Paris: Cerf, 1998], p. 45; repeated by Laporte), following O’Meara, that the same point can be made with reference to Scripture, as Thomas did in his Commentary on the Sentences (I d. 2, prol.), quoting Revelation: “I am the alpha and the omega” (Rev 2.2). Moreover, Torrell notes (STA II, p. 56) that Thomas makes the relevant theological point at ScG IV, 21 (3576) in the Aristotelian terms of causality: “Everything found in us comes from God and is linked with him as to its efficient cause and its exemplary cause: he is the efficient cause, since through God’s active power everything is accomplished in us; he is the exemplary cause, because everything in us which is of God imitates God in a certain way.” Cf. ST I 8, 3 c.

“summary schema” of exitus et reditus “was not, for [Thomas], a handy framework upon which he arranged as he pleased the vast subject matter of sacred doctrine, but rather an order for science, injecting intelligibility into the heart of the revealed datum.” Thus, the “plan of the Summa is truly a theological plan, that is, a plan in which God’s science is formally and spiritually the principle of man’s science, supplying the latter at once with its object, its light, and its character of necessity.”899 The plan of the Summa, in other words, is theological in its intellective and intelligible aspect, as God’s own knowledge imparted to human beings who need their way to God illumined by him.

Chenu’s contrast between what he called intelligibility and what he called history is, however, notoriously problematic.900 On the one hand, “more than elsewhere in the Summa,” the tertia pars is “dominated” by “history,” wrote Chenu, “because here [is] a ‘revelation,’ in the strong sense of the word.”901 On the other hand, since “the object of theology is properly and primarily not the [historical] economy by which man is the recipient of faith and of grace through Christ but rather is God in his very reality,” “surely” the theological science of sacred doctrine “is intelligibility in the highest degree, exceeding all historical categories and making theology a wisdom.”902 Chenu’s rather

899 Chenu, Toward Understanding St. Thomas, pp. 306-07; trans. altered.


901 Toward Understanding St. Thomas, p. 305.

902 Ibid., pp. 307-08. See similarly p. 311: “Emanation-return are intelligibility in fullness. All creatures, and particularly human creatures, all events, and particularly human events, are framed between two causes—the efficient cause, God-Creator-and-Conserver (Ia Pars), and the final cause, God-Beatifier-and-Glorified (IIa Pars—as between the two supreme reasons giving them meaning and value before the mind.”
infamous conclusion is, in effect, the sum of these two claims: “judging in the abstract, [the tertia pars] would seem to play the role of no more than a part added to the whole as an afterthought.”

This cannot be right, if the principal conclusions of the tertia pars are enunciated more or less obliquely in a christological form at the outset of the work, and repeatedly thereafter in each successive part: theology as a wisdom that ought to be both studied and suffered in and after God, theology as “the word of the cross” (I Cor 1.18). In this case, the coherence of the earlier parts will have presupposed and required the fullness of Christology, whether or not the interesting question of the intended argumentative relationship between ST I and ST III can be settled. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts in the Word, divine Wisdom incarnated in time. And because the sacraments are “effects” of this same Word, we can rightly conclude that Aquinas “builds his


904 ST I 1, 6 ad 3, quoting Dionysius, Divine Names 2: “Hierotheus doctus est non solum discens, sed et patiens divina.”

905 See esp. chs. 2 and 5, above.

906 For instance, did Thomas think that the ordo disciplinae required that one begin with God as creator before arriving at Christology? If so, did he understand this conclusion intra-systematically (with the relatively timeless, primary materials of the discipline in view), or rather historico-culturally (with the peculiar educational challenges of his day at the forefront of his mind, challenges that by definition would vary with changing circumstances)? Of course, even if the answer to the first question is “no” (in the strong sense of a necessary order), this does not mean that we should abandon the notion of a contiguous argument in the Summa as written, nor fall into the error of treating the various subjects of the work—God, creation, the moral life, Jesus Christ, sacraments—as relatively autonomous loci. As Mark Jordan notes of the pedagogy of the Summa, Thomas intends it “to be a single, continuous solicitation to acquire and exercise the habit of theology in all of its parts” (Rewritten Theology: Aquinas after His Readers [Oxford: Blackwell, 2006], p. 120).

907 III 60, 3 c et passim; cf. III prologue and III 60 prologue.
theological edifice from its very foundations towards an eventual understanding of Christian liturgy.”

Chenu himself allowed that “each of the elements of theology, by its location, is referred from within to God and to the word of God.” He did not draw the conclusion, however, that God is on this account not only the matter but the form of theological inquiry, its singular lexical, grammatical, and ascetical condition in the Word incarnate and crucified. To affirm the latter does not contradict but rather rightly interpret the fact that sacred doctrine as wisdom proceeds “sub ratione Dei,” and so is not first of all or in any sense foundationally anthropological. The reason of God is turned, as in Scripture itself, to the events of God’s own gracious action in history. Historical “revelation” (even “in the strong sense,” as Chenu says) and “God in his very reality” as wisdom are, in sacred doctrine, not so much contrasted with one another as mutually implicated.

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909 Toward Understanding St. Thomas, p. 308; trans. altered.

910 ST I 1, 7 c.

911 Again, Toward Understanding St. Thomas, pp. 305-08. Wayne Hankey would agree with the gist of this paragraph both as a statement about the formal and material unity of the *Summa* and with reference to problems with Chenu; see *God in Himself*, pp. 24, 34-35, 139, and passim. And he would agree that, by virtue of his Christology—in particular, Christ as savior—a *reditus* to human beings takes place in Thomas’s theology (as is clear already at I 1, 1), which Hankey dubs “anthropocentric” (pp. 31, 35) and

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Torrell more nearly approaches without making this point by arguing that the beginning and the end of the *Summa* enunciate God’s creative inauguration of “time and the history of salvation.” For this reason, all that Christ “did and suffered” as the incarnate savior (III prologue) can, “in the salvation-historical order,” be viewed as at once a material and formal “structure” of the *Summa*. Thomas Potvin completes the thought in his neglected study of “the primacy of Christ and its scriptural foundations” in Aquinas by locating Thomas’s understanding of salvation history, hence of theology, in the action of the trinitarian Word of Wisdom. “This is a valid method,” observes Potvin, “once we have admitted that, in faith, we are given to participate, in an imperfect manner, in the knowledge which God has of himself and of all creatures in the Word.”

In this perspective, Jean-Marc Laporte’s useful argument about the pervasiveness of Christology in the *Summa* should be supplemented with reference to the Word as both *terminus ad quem* and *terminus a quo*, to whom all language, thence sacred doctrine and

which I call experiential, following Thomas’s own usage. Our interests differ, however, in that Hankey wishes to show that “the history of Christian Neoplatonism” provides the *Summa* with its “fundamental structures” (p. 139), while I am interested in the incarnate and crucified Word as the rhetorical condition of the *Summa*, and in that sense a “structure.”

STA II, p. 55. Cf. the astute observation of Rudi A. Te Velde in *Aquinas on God: The ‘Divine Science’ of the Summa Theologiae* (London: Ashgate, 2006): “It seems... incorrect to place the First Part under the heading of exitus only, and reserve the reitus for the Second Part, since the reitus aspect according to which all things are ordered to God as to their end also falls under the general heading of creation” (p. 14).

Quoting Johnstone, “The Debate on the Structure of the *Summa Theologiae* of St Thomas Aquinas,” p. 198, who reaches this conclusion in large part on the basis of Torrell’s recent work (itself indebted to the historical “turn” effected especially by Lafont, Seckler, Congar, and Pesch).

its sacred Scripture, are appropriated.\textsuperscript{915} After and in him the faithful are formed until they arrive at wisdom as an experiential knowledge,\textsuperscript{916} and only on this basis is Christ our way back to God, in Scripture and \textit{Summa} alike.\textsuperscript{917} This is a different point than that made by Laporte when he urges study of both the \textit{Summa}’s “content” and “performance” in order to see that Aquinas not only ends “with the total Christ in whom we have access to eternal life, but... also begins with the same total Christ who teaches us down through the centuries, giving to us the principles we need for the systematic elaboration of \textit{sacra doctrina}.”\textsuperscript{918} Laporte’s insight is correct, so far as it goes; Albert Patfoort’s “straightforward narrative reading of the \textit{Summa}’s text,” for instance—organized in three parts: Father (\textit{prima pars}), Holy Spirit (\textit{secunda pars}), and Son (\textit{tertia pars})—is not the only or most obvious “diachronic” ordering of the work as a whole.\textsuperscript{919} Laporte mistakenly concludes, however, that the “order of scientific pedagogy leads from God to Christ; the order of discovery leads from Christ to God.”\textsuperscript{920} The order of scientific pedagogy in the \textit{Summa} is, from the start, presented in terms of a wisdom, appropriated soon thereafter to the Son as Word, a systematic decision that structures the work as a

\textsuperscript{915} ST I 34 and 93; cf. III 42, 4 ad 1. See the preliminary discussion of Laporte’s essay (“Christ in Aquinas’s \textit{Summa Theologiae}: Peripheral or Pervasive?” \textit{Thomist} 67 [2003]: 221-48) in ch. 1, above. Laporte takes himself to be following Eugene F. Rogers, Jr., \textit{Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth: Sacred Doctrine and the Natural Knowledge of God} (Notre Dame: UNDP, 1995), who only marginally more than Laporte articulates sacred doctrine as both \textit{scientia} and \textit{sapientia} (see, e.g., pp. 59-70 in Rogers).

\textsuperscript{916} I 43, 5 ad 2; cf. I 1, 6 ad 3 and III 3, 8 c.

\textsuperscript{917} I 2 prologue.

\textsuperscript{918} “Christ in Aquinas’s \textit{Summa Theologiae},” pp. 244-45


\textsuperscript{920} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 245.
whole. In this way, the *ordo disciplinae* is not at odds with, nor paradoxically arranged with respect to, the *ordo inventionis*, or vice versa, for the beginning and the end of each is the same: the trinitarian Word, as the condition for sacred doctrine as a science of wisdom. Accordingly, the argument for a christological center of the *Summa* need not be mounted first of all as a “retrospective and synchronic” reading of the whole, as Laporte suggests, beginning from the *tertia pars* and working back to the *prima*, but may be pursued rather more prosaically as a diachronic inspection of each part, in the order presented.\(^{921}\) Or so the present study has, in part, sought to demonstrate.

II. Reason as sapiential Word

Given the inadequacy of human reason (*ratio*) to attain to certain knowledge of God, the *Summa* begins by arguing for the necessity of divine revelation. A principal task of sacred doctrine, however, is to reason anew with revealed materials as a body of knowledge (*scientia*) that belongs properly to God but may in turn be known by his disciples through faith. As Thomas puts it at I 1, 8 ad 2:

> sacred doctrine makes use even of human reason, not to prove faith (for thereby the merit of faith would come to an end), but to make clear other things that are put forward in this doctrine. Since therefore grace does not destroy nature but perfects it, natural reason should minister to faith as the

\(^{921}\) *Ibid.*, p. 231. This, then, would be the answer as well to Sarah Coakley’s consideration of the “curious” possibility that we are “to read the whole *Summa* backwards” for Christology (“Climax or Incoherence? The Place of Christology in Thomas’s *Summa Theologiae*,” *Providence: Studies in Western Civilization* [Providence College Press], 8/1 [2003], p. 63).
natural bent of the will ministers to charity. Hence the Apostle says: “We take every thought captive to obey Christ” (II Cor 10.5).922

And Christ is the reason of God as his pedagogy: the living Verbum or Logos, in and after whom sacred doctrine becomes a wisdom to the end of human sanctification.923 To be sure, ratio and logos may be distinguished, since word properly denotes expression and communication, and so effective and creative power, whereas ratio suggests “only the cognitive character of the concept or mental word.” But “logos significet in Latino rationem et verbum,” as Thomas observes on John 1.1; that is, the Greek logos includes in its meaning both speech (verbum) and reason (ratio).924 Accordingly, Word specifies the fullness of Christ’s identity as revealed to rational creatures for their salvation.925

Is this sort of approach to reason in the Summa—emphasizing its reordered, redirected purpose as imitation of Christ the Word—controversial in contemporary scholarly literature on the subject? Such an approach has become more common in the wake of the historical-exegetical Thomisms of Chenu, Congar, and their heirs, but remains a minority view among more philosophically-minded Thomists. The argument of the present study thus swims more or less upstream relative to those who would, in their study of reason (and related subjects) in Thomas, focus on questions about

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922 I 1, 8 ad 2. Cf. I 32, 1 c; II-II 1, 5 ad 2. Gilles Emery refers to this constant methodological principle in Thomas’s theological work as “the ‘negative’ aspect of the intellectus fidei” (in Saint Thomas d’Aquin, Les raisons de la foi [Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1999], p. 40; cf. pp. 24-30).

923 I 1, 6 and 7 sc; I 43, 5 ad 2; In Heb 4.12, n. 217. Again, the “ratio Dei” of I 1, 7 c takes on a christological cast in this light. Cf. the discussion in chs. 2-3 and 5-7, above.


925 See again, e.g., III 23 and 42 in light of the larger argument of chs. 3, 5, and 6 above.
“ontotheology,”926 “postmodern Augustinianism,”927 “Reformed epistemology,”928 other religions,929 or faithful churchly responses to the ruins of rationalism.930

Without embarking on a thorough survey of the literature (which is beyond the scope of the present chapter), it may be useful to consider one recent assay of reason in Aquinas—by John Milbank (and his colleague Catherine Pickstock)—that bears a family resemblance to the view defended here, but with important differences.

Milbank takes as read Bruce Marshall’s contention that Thomas consistently explicates the articles of faith holistically, whence their “meaning and interpretation” are fixed by “the truth value” assigned to them by the Church, and so by their logical connections “as a package.”931 Following Lindbeck,932 Marshall initially offered his interpretation in light of ST II-II 2, 2 ad 3:


believing about God does not belong to unbelievers in the same way that it
does to the act of faith (credere Deum non convenit infidelibus sub ea ratione qua ponitur actus fidei); nor, indeed, do they believe that God
exists under the conditions fixed by faith. Therefore they do not truly
believe about God (nec vere Deum credunt)—since, as the Philosopher
says (in Metaphysics 9), in simple things a defect of cognition amounts to
a total failure of comprehension.933

If we use this text, and others like it,934 as a sort of hermeneutical key for
interpreting Thomas aright on faith and knowledge of the articles, standard accounts of
the so-called “preambles of faith” appear problematic.935 For instance, because God’s
unity is also an article of faith,936 it is, like God’s existence, believed “under the
conditions fixed by faith.”937 Read in this way, ST I 2, 2 ad 1, for instance, yields two
approaches to the preambles: one “per rationem naturalem,” after the manner of a gentile
philosopher, and the other “ut credibile.” In the latter case, “the belief that God exists…

Marshall on p. 39 and in note 82 (misciting ST II-II 2, 2 ad 3) in Truth in Aquinas, in the chapter “Truth
and Vision” (an earlier version of which appeared as “Intensities” in Modern Theology, 15/4 [1999], pp.
445-97).

932 George A. Lindbeck, The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age

933 ST II-II 2, 2 ad 3.

934 E.g., II-II 10, 3 c: “Nec potest esse quod quantum ad quid Deum cognoscat qui falsam
opinionem de eo habet, quia id quod ipse opinatur non est Deus” (my emphasis).

935 Thomas occasionally refers to the preambles—explicitly at Expositio super librum Boethii De
Trinitate 2, 3 c; rather more opaquely at, e.g., ST I 2, 2 ad 1 and II-II 1, 5 ad 3 and 2, 10 ad 2.

936 II-II 1, 8 c and ad 1. Cf. I-II 99, 2 ad 2; De ver. 14, 9 ad 8.

937 II-II 2, 2 ad 3. Cf. II-II 16, 1 c: that “God exists… is first and principle among all the
credibilia” (credimus Deum esse, quod est primum et principale inter omnia credibilia; cited by Marshall,
“Thomas, Thomisms, and Truth,” p. 516 n. 35). Citing De ver. 14, 9 c, ST I 2, 2 ad 1, and II-II 1, 5 c, ad 3
and ad 4, Marshall adds that “Thomas does indeed distinguish between propositions about God which
cannot be demonstrated and those which can, but this is a distinction within the contents of the articles of
faith (between what belongs to faith simpliciter and secundum quid), not a distinction between the articles
of faith and an independently accessible body of knowledge” (ibid., p. 516).
does not constitute faith” (since faith requires not only a material *credere Deum* but also a formal *credere Deo* [II-II 2, 2 c]), but it is “strictly speaking… a part of faith.”

Likewise, II-II 2, 10 ad 2, in the clause, “Sed rationes demonstrativae inductae ad ea quae sunt fidei, praebamba tamen ad articulos,” must refer, on Marshall’s reading, to *scientia* after faith, since “*scientia* regarding God is [not] possible independently of faith, that is, apart from conditions of coherence defined by faith.”

In his reply to critics in 1992, Marshall bolstered his position by reading especially Aquinas’s commentary on Romans 1, according to which, in Marshall’s words,

the error (and specifically the idolatry) of the Gentiles overrides the knowledge of himself which God has given to them “from creation known through the senses”; in consequence the further possibility of this knowledge (the *lumen interius*) is withdrawn by God. With regard to the Gentiles, including their *sapientes*—the philosophers with demonstrative

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938 Quoting John I. Jenkins, *Knowledge and Faith in Thomas Aquinas* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), p. 162, to a different end; cf. pp. 197-200, however, for mixed signals from Jenkins on this point.


940 “Aquinas as Postliberal Theologian,” p. 393; citing also, on p. 391, II-II 2, 3 c: “Omnis autem talis addiscens oportet quod credat, ad hoc quod ad perfectam scientiam perveniat,” and, on p. 399 note 108, I-II 67, 3 c: “potest enim unus homo cognoscere eandem conclusionem per medium probabile et demonstrativum.” See also II-II 1, 5 ad 2 and ad 4 which, pace Jenkins (op. cit., p. 162 note 7; and the same is true of the other texts cited there and at p. 197ff.), do not speak of demonstrations of the preambles as “*scientia*” (even “*quia*,” as Jenkins claims) contrasted with *fides*. Jenkins also never handles II-II 2, 2 or 2, 10, the latter of which would have rendered superfluous the question (at pp. 201-02) regarding a possible priority of “the credibility arguments.”

For his part, de Broglie’s rather modest concern in his long article was to insist, against certain Thomists of his day, that it is not necessary in Thomas’s view to demonstrate the preambles before one is justified to proceed to faith. Rather, “les objets essentielles et caracteristiques de la foi, c’est-à-dire les ‘articles’ du *Credo*, contiennent intelligiblement en eux, comme elements de base, des verites relevent, en droit, de la simple connaissance naturelle, lesquelles peuvent donc egalement bien nous etre connues avant la foi, ou ne nous arriver, au contraire, que par elle” (op. cit., p. 387; italics in original). He thus does not offer anything like Marshall’s careful sifting of *fides* and *scientia* in Thomas. All the same, it is striking that the erroneous position de Broglie rightly concerns himself with answering is basically the same as that identified and rebutted by Jenkins as “the naturalist interpretation” of Aquinas on faith’s justification, a position held by “several prominent contemporary philosophers of religion,” including John Hick, Terence Penelhum, Alvin Plantinga, and Louis Pojman (Jenkins, op. cit., pp. 163ff. and 252 note 14).
arguments—the denial of knowledge overrides the initial ascription of it.941

Thomas also repeats the point when commenting on John 17.25 (“O righteous Father, the world has not known you”), which he connects with Romans 1.19 and following, culminating in the flat statement: “Unde etsi in minimo aliqui errant circa Dei cognitionem, dicuntur eum totaliter ignorare.”942 As Marshall notes, therefore, Thomas’s point of departure at ST I 1, 1 c—that “it was necessary for human beings to be instructed by divine revelation even with regard to those things about God which can be investigated by human reason”—seems especially to follow from “the irreversible scriptural narrative of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation, in which all human beings are implicated, and within the context of which all of their capacities and achievements must be understood…. A fortiori there can be scientia regarding God for fallen human beings… only after faith.”943

Milbank, in turn, offers that philosophy as metaphysics functions in the Summa not in contrast with sacra doctrina but as, “at the very most,” a distinct pedagogical


943 “Thomas, Thomisms, and Truth,” pp. 514-16. See further Bruce D. Marshall, “Quod Scit Una Uetula: Aquinas on the Nature of Theology,” The Theology of Thomas Aquinas, ed. Rik Van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow (Notre Dame: UNDP, 2005), which rearticulates and extends all the preceding points, esp. at pp. 16-25 (the title of the latter essay adverts to “a favorite Latin topos” also discussed by Mark Jordan, namely, “that a little old lady [uetula] under the Christian dispensation speaks more truly about God than the highest metaphysician without it” [Ordering Wisdom, p. 200]). Marshall’s “challenging” and “provocative” research (in the words of Fergus Kerr [Modern Theology, 16/4 (2000), p. 503]), especially as a reading of Thomas’s indebtedness to Paul, was picked up and elaborated in Rogers’s Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth, esp. ch. 6 (cf. comments by Kerr, After Aquinas, pp. 63-65 and 207 note 3).
“phase” within the one “gnoseological extension” that is the context of all created thought, namely, “the uncreated and intelligible light of the divine intellect.”944 Milbank bases this claim first of all on Thomas’s clear statement about why sacred doctrine employs philosophy, namely, because of “the defect of our intelligence, which is more easily led by that which is known through natural reason… to that which is above reason” (I 1, 5 ad 2).945 The point here is the familiar one that philosophy is not, for theology, an independent body of knowledge about divine things but rather a tool of the trade, alike practically necessary and in no sense materially comparable. In the second place, therefore, because sacred doctrine is above—in Milbank’s phrase, “more intense” than—the other sciences, including metaphysics, it is able to and must “judge” them insofar as they contradict the truth (I 1, 6 ad 2); and it is in this sense that, before sacred doctrine is able to use philosophy/metaphysics, and continually thereafter, it must displace or overcome them, so that the latter in no way hinder and only assist the “bringing into captivity of all understanding unto the service of Christ” (II Cor 10.5).946 In this way, metaphysics is at once “elevated”947 and “evacuated”948 by Thomas, as need and occasion

944 Truth in Aquinas, pp. 21-22. His qualification “at the very most” is worth emphasizing in light of his final answer on the question later in the essay: “it would appear that reason is not even a ‘phase’ distinct from faith—though it may offer a lesser degree of intensity—since it is situated in the same ‘intense’ suspension between time and eternity, and Aquinas affirms… that all speculative sciences participate obscurely in the beatific vision” (p. 39). Cf. Jordan’s handling of this text of Milbank at Rewritten Theology, p. 87.

945 Ibid., p. 27 note 34 (the citation is marred by a typographical error).

946 ST I 1, 8 ad 2; following Milbank’s argument at ibid., pp. 42-43 (his citation in note 98 of I 1, 7 for the quotation of II Cor 10.5 is erroneous).


948 Ibid., p. 42.
dictate; or: “it is less that metaphysics is abandoned by reflection on scripture, and much
more that it is fulfilled in its intention, but beyond its own understanding of this intention.
It is both suspended and subsumed.”949

So far so good, as a fairly straightforward reading—exegesis and interpretation—
of Thomas.950 Milbank’s “energetically erudite polemic” is not without its problems,
however.951 Above all, Milbank does not insist that reason in Thomas’s view is overcome
and consummated in Christ, the Word of wisdom, nor does he begin to trace out the
implications of the point for the shape of the Summa.952 Thus, after a dubious discussion
of Thomas’s “speculative reach to the Trinity,” Milbank stipulates that “Aquinas argues
to Christology and the sacraments and not (or not so fundamentally) from them.”953 As
the present study has sought to demonstrate, Thomas argues from and to all the articles of

949 Ibid., p. 25.

950 Notwithstanding Milbank’s claim that “exegesis is easy; it is interpretation that is difficult”
(ibid., p. 20). Milbank’s exegesis here is, for instance, more successful than his earlier “Only Theology
Overcomes Metaphysics,” The Word Made Strange: Theology, Language, Culture (Oxford: Blackwell,
1997), perhaps thanks to Nicholas Lash’s provocation to greater clarity, “Where Does Holy Teaching
Leave Philosophy? Questions on Milbank’s Aquinas,” Modern Theology, 15/4 (1999), pp. 433-44, to which
“Intensities” (note 931, above) was in part a response. Lash’s essay is less useful than it might have been,
had it cited or otherwise acknowledged the point of ST I I, 5 ad 2 on the use of philosophy by sacred
doctrine; nor does I 1, 1 ad 2, cited by Lash in his note 45, by itself make the point unambiguously. Lacking
this, Lash fails to chart explicitly Thomas’s account of the consummation of reason and metaphysics by
wisdom/fait, a lacuna that risks slipping back into a conception of philosophy/metaphysics and sacra
doctrina as simply and unproblematically “autonomous” domains, operating respectively under the sign of
“nature” and “grace.” On this point, the essay of Mark Jordan cited by Lash might have been better
exploited. Lash’s subsequent, critical reflections on Fides et ratio, “‘Visio Unica et Ordinata Scientiae’?”
in Restoring Faith in Reason handle this concern, however, e.g. at pp. 229 and 233.


952 Milbank and Pickstock rarely mention wisdom in Truth in Aquinas, and then almost as if by
accident, e.g., at pp. 20, 124 note 81, 125 note 88, and 110. An instance of its glaring absence is the first
section of ch. 3 (p. 60ff.) on Thomas’s fittingness arguments (ex convenientia) in connection with the
Incarnation.

953 Truth in Aquinas, pp. 55-56; emphasis in original.
faith (as revealed principles, incapable of proof\textsuperscript{954}), including Christ and the sacraments, following the exemplary precedent of the Word. From this perspective, Milbank is also mistaken in his further directional claim that contemporary theology “is” (in the sense of \textit{ought to be?}) “an argument towards practice… even more fundamentally than an argument from practice,” following Thomas’s example, for whom “liturgical, ethical and poetic practice… which theurgically brings down, and yet receives, the intensity of the divine intuition into our sensory intuition, is the culmination of speculation, the most theoretical moment of all. And thus true practice always was to come.”\textsuperscript{955} Milbank’s prescription of a \textit{practical} theology might be defended with reference to ST I 1, 6 ad 3, where Thomas indicates the proper orientation of sacred doctrine as wisdom: “\textit{non solum discens sed et patiens divina.”} This point follows, however, his insistence that theology only offers a kind of second-order wisdom to students, “\textit{per modum cognitionis},” comparable to the way that “someone instructed in the moral sciences can examine virtuous actions even if he does not himself possess virtue.” By contrast, the first mode of wisdom, that which obviously should be so called, is, as Scripture testifies, a gift of the Holy Spirit; it is “experienced” “\textit{per modum inclinationis},” rather like those “who have the habit of a virtue are able to judge certain things accordingly.”\textsuperscript{956} So far from being “the culmination of speculation,” in Milbank’s words, as if human experience of God


\textsuperscript{955} From the conclusion of “Intensities,” p. 488, dropped for \textit{Truth in Aquinas}. Subsequent quotations from “Intensities” below are also from this conclusion.

\textsuperscript{956} All from I 1, 6 ad 3.
depended on antecedent fits of febrile intellation, “true practice,” above all in the lives of the faithful, is rather the “liturgical, ethical and poetic” ground and guide for the reflective labors of theologians.957

If Christian wisdom moreover gratefully follows and imitates the form of Christ, then it is also backward to suggest, as Milbank has it, that God “cannot be available to us before our response to him,” so that Christ arrives “only with, through and as the Church,” “partially enticed through certain regular ritual performances.”958 It is hard to see why Milbank suggests this, given his defense in the same essay of Thomas’s “understanding of causality in terms of requisition and participation,” citing ST I 34, 3 c: “the word of God… is both expressive and operative of creatures.”959 God, especially as the Logos, is “eminently that moulding or shaping through which alone subjects communicate with each other, and together modify their shared objective medium to produce history.”960

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957 Again, “Intensities,” p. 488. Milbank does not, I think, have this point in view when he writes (rightly) that “in order to encounter the divine, we must rely less on theoretic ascent than on a divine descent,” or again, that in the “response” of “our work, our gift, our art, our hymn,” God “is already present” (Truth in Aquinas, p. 58). Nor is it the case that the Summa merely “builds up to” Christ as “the true theology” (ibid., p. 65).


959 Truth in Aquinas, pp. 31-32, esp. note 52.

960 Ibid., p. 87.
Digging more deeply into Milbank’s peculiar, “anthropological” metaphysics, it
seems that the use of philosophy in sacred doctrine (according to ST I 1, 5 ad 2) has
become a kind of alibi of the letter that is alienated from the spirit of Thomas’s thought,
especially in the *Summa*.961 Thus, Milbank charts the paradoxes and interstices of
Thomistic metaphysics because “the weak analogical recourses of metaphysics which
reason to God only as first cause are in fact the only terms in which *sacra doctrina* can
receive and comprehend the revelation of God as he is in himself,”962 and because “no
longer [in the *Summa*] does metaphysics offer vague similitudes of theological
similitudes…. Instead, theology has direct recourse to metaphysical *scientia*—its
unarguable principled insights and its discursive arguments.”963 Either way—negatively,
in terms of our limited *modus significandi*, or positively, in terms of the reach of
metaphysics—the discursive upshot of sacred doctrine and its theology tends, in
Milbank’s appropriation, toward an aporetics of speculative play under the sign of
Incarnation. Here, as Mark Jordan has noted, there is an apparent gap between Milbank’s
purpose and performance, as the “disciplinary voice” of *Truth in Aquinas* “implies that
the mutual intensities of philosophical theology and *sacra doctrina* should be spoken
entirely in philosophy’s terms.” “How can the book’s own movement not mirror the

961 *Ibid.*, p. 59. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 26-27, esp. the claim that in the *Summa* “the focus is upon the need
for *sacra doctrina*… to deploy philosophical arguments” (p. 27); also pp. 23-24.


movement of truth it wants to describe?” asks Jordan. “How can the book persuade that truth is vulnerable flesh while wearing the brightest armor of disciplinary victory?”

The problem is partly material, as Milbank’s reading of question 1 of the *Summa* never explicitly refers to or handles the articles of faith, which, rather than “philosophical theology” as Milbank suggests, are the hermeneutic center and pivot of sacred doctrine as a divine science.965 We surely do not comprehend God as he is in himself (*quid est*) by the articles,966 but they are our chief way to God, and the starting point for theology, as the science of sacred Scripture (I 1, 2 ad 2). “Reasoning to God by the weak recourses of metaphysics,” however important this may be for philosophers and theologians to try to do, precisely does not yield the “terms in which *sacra doctrina* can receive… the revelation of God.”967 These terms are the words of Scripture and the creeds, patterned

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965 *Truth in Aquinas*, p. 21, where Milbank identifies “‘philosophical’ theology” and “*divina scientia*”; and the references on p. 27 to “the divine science” and on p. 32 to the “*Scientia Dei*” do not clear up the confusion. (Milbank was perhaps at first thinking of—though he nowhere cites—Thomas’s comment at *Expositio super librum Boethii De Trinitate* 2, 2 c that “the philosophers called first philosophy ‘divine science’” [*philosophiam primam scientiam divinam dicentes*]; this reference is, however, not homogeneous with Thomas’s use of the term at ST I 1.) For implicit references to the articles as the “first principles” of sacred doctrine, see *ibid.*, pp. 25, 36, 42-43. For Thomas’s use of *divina scientia* (and *scientia Dei*) see ST I 1, 2 c, 5 c, and 6 ad 1. “Philosophical theology” is not a term Thomas uses, though he does speak in ST I 1, 1 ad 2 of “that theology which is part of philosophy,” which “differs in kind (*secundum genus*) from the theology which pertains to sacred doctrine.” Milbank’s distance from Thomas’s own terminology here is reminiscent of Norman Kretzmann, who regularly speak of Thomas’s “philosophical theology.” See, e.g., *Kretzmann, The Metaphysics of Theism: Aquinas’s Natural Theology in Summa contra gentiles* I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997). The historical and exegetical anachronism of Kretzmann’s picture of Thomas’s putative “natural theology” has been ably challenged by Thomas Hibbs in “Kretzmann’s Theism vs. Aquinas’s Theism: Interpreting the *Summa Contra Gentiles*,” *The Thomist* 62 (1998), pp. 603-22.

966 As Milbank notes, in terms of the “restrictions…placed on *sacra doctrina*” (*ibid.*, p. 30; cf. p. 37).

967 Quoting again *ibid.*, p. 26; and see the movement of the complete paragraph on p. 28, and what it reveals about Milbank’s interests and presuppositions.
after the action of God in Christ. To miss this point is to forget why a science of sacred doctrine was “necessary” in the first place (I 1, 1 c).\footnote{Milbank occasionally acknowledges the position of Scripture in Thomas’s hierarchy of authorities (e.g., at \textit{ibid.}, pp. 25, 27, and esp. 43), but it is not clear whether he fully appreciates the shape—christological, scriptural, sacramental—of Thomas’s thought.}

The problem is thus also formal, since Milbank’s performance amounts, at best, to a negative-metaphysical prolegomenon to studying or doing sacred doctrine in and after Thomas,\footnote{So, e.g., \textit{ibid.}, p. 58: “It has been shown how, in three ways, Aquinas’s sacra doctrina bends metaphysics into history: ….” Cf. p. 66.} even when there appears to be an interest in doing so. In an essay on “Truth and touch,” for instance, which strives to be richly christological and begins promisingly, the vast compass, details, and texture of Thomas’s arguments disappear, and with them the saint’s restraint. Focusing on the metaphysical question of Christ’s singular \textit{esse} (III 17, 2\footnote{About which there has also been considerable debate in recent years, though Milbank does not mention this. See Thomas’s disputed question \textit{De Unione Verbi Incarnati}, esp. at art. 4, which argues for two \textit{esse} in Christ, and commentary by Stephen F. Brown, “Thomas Aquinas and His Contemporaries on the Unique Existence in Christ,” \textit{Christ among the Medieval Dominicans: Representations of Christ in the Texts and Images of the Order of Preachers}, ed. Kent Emery, Jr. and Joseph Wawrykow (Notre Dame: UNDP, 1998).}) as a springboard for constructive speculations, the essay ascends to a long excursus on Aristotle’s \textit{De Anima} and Aquinas’s appropriation and modification thereof before returning to several christological themes. Along the way, an unhappy specter of human accomplishment mars the argument, rendering it less plausibly Thomistic, as in the claim that “Aquinas considers liturgy… something we must… shape and perform;” and again: “in order to understand anything of divine truth (and so truth \textit{per se}), we must touch divine physical manifestations, and we must elicit these through our crafting of
liturgical enactments.” Analogously, the next chapter (by Pickstock), “Truth and language,” elects not to trace the words of the mass back to the primordial and incarnated speech of the *Logos,* so that Christ as “Word” functions as a placeholder for the event of Incarnation, and the liturgy is analyzed in the functionalist terms of our desire for God. Again, Liam Walsh more nearly captures Thomas’s approach to liturgy when he notes that it should “begin with a strictly theological idea rather than [an] anthropological one,” so that “the first thing a theologian should say about liturgy is that it is the action of God,” that is, “the work of grace.”

III. Passionate Word

The wise person will not dismiss out of hand that “the Word of God suffered and died,” wrote St Thomas in 1265, less than a year before composing the first question of the *Summa.* Rather, the opposite is true: “If someone considers with a pious intention the fittingness of the passion and death of Christ, he will discover such a depth of wisdom that, thinking about it, more and greater things will always occur to him, so that he can experience the truth” of Christ crucified. In this way, Christ “provokes others to virtue”

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971 *Truth in Aquinas,* pp. 83 and 87.
972 *Ibid.,* pp. 100-04; cf. ST III 78, 2 obj. 2 and ad 2.
973 *Ibid.,* pp. 95 and 107. Cf. ST III 78, 1 c; 83, 3 sc and obj. 8 and ad 8.
975 *De rationibus fidei ad Cantorem Antiochenum* 7, 6-7 and 32-36: “Si quis ergo convenientiam passionis et mortis Christi pia intentione consideret, tantam sapientiae profunditatem inveniet ut semper aliqua cogitanti plura et maiora occurrant, ita quod experiri possit verum esse quod Apostolus dicit ‘Nos praedicamus Christum crucifixum, Iudaieis quidem scandalum, Gentibus autem stultitiam; nobis autem
by his suffering and death, according to I Peter 2.21: “Christ suffered for us, leaving for you an example so that you might follow in his footsteps.” And in this way, Thomas tracks the purpose of the Word incarnate, who removes our perversity of will by “showing” God’s love to us, that we might “learn about,” “reflect upon,” and otherwise “contemplate the divine height,” and so be carried to it “by the proper affection of love... and the help of God, with great striving and labor.”

There is here a promise in Thomas’s theology that captures the urgency of the gospel of Christ by cleaving to a singular “task,” namely, the application of St John’s Logos to a web of scriptural and sacramental figuration, the end of which is holy obedience. In the Summa theologiae, and in contemporaneous scriptural commentaries,

Christum Dei virtutem et Dei sapientiam.’ Et iterum ‘Quod stultum est Dei sapientius est hominibus.’” Gilles Emery (op. cit., p. 156 note 84) notes that this paragraph “almost literally repeats” the beginning of ScG IV 54, and that Thomas’s invocation of “experience” (experiri) here recalls ST I 1, 6 on the wisdom of sacred doctrine, where Thomas suggests in ad 3 that the “first mode of wisdom” is what Denys intended when he said that Hierotheus “was taught not only by studying but by suffering divine things.”

Ibid. 7, 69-74.

Ibid. 5, 62-65 and 84-90.

Ibid. 5, 106: “demonstratur.”

Ibid. 5, 109: “cognoscat.”

Ibid. 5, 121: “cogitare.”

Ibid. 5, 114: “considerare.”


Aquinas developed the promise by placing the passion of theology—“the word of the cross” (I Cor 1.18)—at the center of his work.
I. Primary

A. Aquinas


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B. Augustine


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