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978-0-521-02933-9 - Summa Theologiae: Volume 25 - Sin, (1a2ae. 71-80)

John Fearon O.P.

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The *Summa Theologiae* ranks among the greatest documents of the Christian Church, and is a landmark of medieval western thought. It provides the framework for Catholic studies in systematic theology and for a classical Christian philosophy, and is regularly consulted by scholars of all faiths and none, across a range of academic disciplines. This paperback reissue of the classic Latin/English edition first published by the English Dominicans in the 1960s and 1970s, in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, has been undertaken in response to regular requests from readers and librarians around the world for the entire series of 61 volumes to be made available again. The original text is unchanged, except for the correction of a small number of typographical errors.

The original aim of this edition was not narrowly ecclesiastical. It sought to make this treasure of the Christian intellectual heritage available to theologians and philosophers of all backgrounds, including those who, without claiming to be believers themselves, appreciate a religious integrity which embodies hardbitten rationalism and who recognise in Thomas Aquinas a master of that perennial philosophy which forms the bedrock of European civilisation. Because of this the editors worked under specific instructions to bear in mind not only the professional theologian, but also the general reader with an interest in the 'reason' in Christianity. The parallel English and Latin texts can be used successfully by anybody with a basic knowledge of Latin, while the presence of the Latin text has allowed the translators a degree of freedom in adapting their English version for modern readers. Each volume contains a glossary of technical terms and is designed to be complete in itself to serve for private study or as a course text.

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SUMMA
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Latin text and English translation,
Introductions, Notes, Appendices
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IN AN AUDIENCE, 13 December 1963, to a group representing the Dominican Editors and the combined Publishers of the New English *Summa*, His Holiness Pope Paul VI warmly welcomed and encouraged their undertaking. A letter from His Eminence Cardinal Cicognani, Cardinal Secretary of State, 6 February 1968, expresses the continued interest of the Holy Father in the progress of the work, 'which does honour to the Dominican Order, and the Publishers, and is to be considered without doubt as greatly contributing to the growth and spread of a genuinely Catholic culture', and communicates his particular Apostolic Blessing.

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521393720

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[Excepting Latin text of 'DE PECCATO']

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This digitally printed first paperback version 2006

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN-13 978-0-521-39372-0 hardback

ISBN-10 0-521-39372-8 hardback

ISBN-13 978-0-521-02933-9 paperback

ISBN-10 0-521-02933-3 paperback

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EDITORIAL NOTES

THE LATIN TEXT

EXCEPT for cleaning up the punctuation and a greater breakdown into paragraphs, the Latin text is that of the Leonine Commission published in manual form by Peter Caramello (1952). The Leonine text of the *Prima Secundæ* uses the Piana edition published under the patronage of Pius V (Rome 1570–1) as a foundation. Only eleven codices and one ancient printed edition are available as a point of departure for textual criticism of this part of the Piana *Summa*, as compared to one hundred and twenty codices for the *Secunda Secundæ*. This not only simplifies the task of the textual critic, but increases the confidence of the modern reader in the authenticity of the Latin text.

THE TRANSLATION

The Latin style and vocabulary are distinctive. Frequently St Thomas expresses himself in a phraseology and idiom quite unknown to the ordinary student of ecclesiastical Latin. He is systematic and rigidly consistent in his use of words and syntax, but he regularly employs classical words in non-classical meanings and often introduces words entirely unknown to writers of the Classical Period. Fortunately, his vocabulary is relatively small. The translator has followed the meaning which long familiarity with the text seems to suggest and which is supported by *A Lexicon of St Thomas Aquinas* by Roy J. Deferrari and M. Inviolata Barry, C.D.P. (Baltimore, 1948).

An English translation which would replicate these features would serve no useful purpose. In fact, the contemporary English reader can be better served by minimizing the linguistic characteristics of St Thomas and concentrating on equivalent expressions of meaning. In this translation both sentences and meaning match. Variant expressions of standard formulæ are deliberately chosen with an eye to the relief of boredom. Explanatory footnotes are added where translation was insufficient.

FOOTNOTES

Those signified by a superior number are the internal references given by St Thomas, with the exception of no. 1 to each article which refers to parallel texts in his writings when they are to be found. Those signified alphabetically are editorial references and explanatory remarks.

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Biblical references are to the Vulgate; Patristic references to Migne (PG, Greek Fathers; PL, Latin Fathers). When the English titles are well known, references to the works of St Thomas and Aristotle are in English. Titles of St Thomas's works are abbreviated as follows:

Summa Theologiae, without title. Part, question, article, reply; e.g. 1a. 70, 1 ad 2. 2a2ae. 25, 4.

Summa Contra Gentiles, *CG*. Book, chapter; e.g. *CG* II, 14.

Scriptum in IV Libros Sententiarum, *Sent.* Book, distinction, question, article, solution or *quæstioncula*, reply; e.g. II *Sent.* 15, I, I, ii ad. 3.

Compendium Theologiae, *Compend. theol.*

Scriptural commentaries (*lecturæ*, *expositiones reportata*): Job, *In Job*; Psalms, *In Psal.*; Isaiah, *In Isa.*; Jeremiah, *In Jerem.*; St Matthew, *In Matt.*; St John, *In Joann.*; Epistles of St Paul, e.g. *In I Cor.* Chapter, verse, *lectio* as required.

Philosophical commentaries: Aristotle, *Peri Hermeneias*, *In Periherm.*; Posterior Analytics, *In Post. Anal.*; Physics, *In Phys.*; *De Cælo et Mundo*, *In de Cæl.*; *De Generatione et Corruptione*, *In de Gen. et Corr.*; *De Anima*, *In de Anima*; Metaphysics, *In Meta.*; Nichomachean Ethics, *In Ethic.*; Politics, *In Pol.* Book, chapter, *lectio* as required, I, also for references to Dionysius, *De Divinis Nominibus*, *In de Div. Nom.* References to Aristotle include the Bekker numbering.

Quæstiones quodlibetæ, *Quodl.*

Complete titles are given for other works.

APPENDICES

Appendices are attached more or less closely to specific questions and articles. They suggest points for further inquiry and provide additional discussion of the subject matter which seemed too lengthy for a footnote.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank Seattle University for a research grant which made this work possible, Miss Marilyn A. Berglund for her indispensable help in the relentless struggle with jargon, Mrs Sandra Rogers for her painstaking care with the Latin text, and Miss Paula Laschober for her alert and conscientious assistance as a researcher.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The *Summa Theologiae* represents in written form the lectures given by St Thomas to young Dominican students in theology, first at Viterbo, then at Paris and finally at Naples. These lectures were given in Dominican Houses of Studies which provided the academic freedom necessary for a new and more scientific approach to the subject. The technique of starting with objections and counter-arguments is not only a pedagogical device to stimulate student curiosity and a spirit of inquiry, but also a real residuum of academic free-for-alls in which the teacher periodically took on all comers with whatever objections and difficulties they could devise.

In the production of his written works after 1259 St Thomas was assisted by a staff of secretaries who helped by copying needed texts and taking dictation. His own handwriting was abominable by any standard. William of Moerbeke, a Flemish Dominican, was included in this staff and either procured or made new translations from the Greek Fathers and the Greek texts of Aristotle. However, much of the actual composition did not take place in the peace and quiet of a priory; St Thomas was frequently on journeys, many of which included crossing the Alps.

The *Summa* is a systematic summary, the parts of which are closely knit. The basic outline of the three parts follows that of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, which in turn follows that of St John Damascene's *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*. Part One treats of God and of all other things inasmuch as they proceed from God; Part Two treats of the rational man's progress toward God; and Part Three treats of Christ as Man being the way to God.

The *Secunda Pars* was composed by St Thomas during his second professorship at Paris (1269–72). The Dominicans had two chairs of theology, one for members of the Order who belonged to the Province of France, and one for those who came from other nations. St Thomas apparently held the latter chair. He was a member of the Roman Province. His second stay at Paris was marked by more controversy than the first. Not only were the secular masters of the University continuing with increased vigour their attack upon the mendicant friars, but a wholesale attack and heresy hunt had been mounted by the traditionalists, who have been characterized as holding Augustinianism, against the new and more rationally orientated philosophy and theology which had been developed among the Dominicans by St Albert the Great and St Thomas Aquinas, and which incorporated the newly restored thinking of Aristotle. This campaign actually succeeded in bringing about the condemnation of many Thomistic positions by Bishop Tempier three years to the day after the death of St.

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Thomas. This hectic situation was further complicated by a bitter controversy between the Arabian tradition of Aristotelians in the school of arts represented, for example, by Siger of Brabant, and the Dominicans. Although St Thomas was deeply and thoroughly embroiled in every aspect of this heated, polemical, chaotic situation, none of it is reflected in the *Summa* itself. There he is uniformly dispassionate and makes it a practice to avoid referring by name to anyone who was still living.

2. The treatise on sin belongs to the first part of the *Secunda Pars*, and is referred to as the *Prima Secundæ* (1a2æ). It considers those general aspects of morality which do not have to be repeated over and over again in the second part of the *Secunda Pars*, the *Secunda Secundæ* (2a2æ), which deals with particular virtues, vices, and states of life.

In its overall outline the *Prima Secundæ* follows the plan of Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*, i.e. it begins with the purpose of human life and then proceeds to a discussion of human behaviour as meaningful in terms of that purpose. Of course, the author differs from Aristotle in that the ultimate purpose of the Christian life is the vision of God which can be achieved only in the next life, but which is approached in this life by the love of God.

This general consideration of morality is also similar to Aristotle's in that it is more concerned with human character and the formation of virtue than with casuistry, which is the moral evaluation of individual human actions. For both Aristotle and St Thomas virtues and vices determine the actual course human life takes; they are in some sense determinants of human behaviour, or principles of human action. From this it is obvious that this part of the *Summa Theologiæ* was intended not so much for the education of priests as ministers of the sacrament of penance, but for the formation of theological minds whose interests in morality would be larger than the context of the confessional. In fact, the whole orientation of theology in early Dominican education was toward preaching and theological controversy with heretics.

3. In the prologue to Question 71, St Thomas provides an outline of the treatise. His approach to the subject matter and his methodology is largely determined by his adherence to the logical processes of the mind as described in Aristotle's *Organon*, especially the *Posterior Analytics*. He starts with a search for a definition of sin, not only because definitions provide knowledge of material things in terms of precise and clear concepts which are the proper object of the human intellect, but also because much of the argumentation of the whole treatise is deductive; i.e. it argues from a definition of sin as a demonstrative principle. The unique contribution of St Thomas at this point is his emphasis on the privative element in sin. This not only fits in with his larger consideration of evil

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(which was a problem that had haunted Christian thinkers from the time of St Clement of Alexandria in his controversies with Gnostics and St Augustine in his controversies with Manicheans, and which was still a live heresy in Europe in the form of Albigensianism), but enabled St Thomas to solve problems which had baffled his predecessors.

The following questions which take up qualitative and quantitative differences in sin are a rigorously logical exploration of the distribution of the term, the extension of the concept, and the applicability of the definition. Starting with Question 72, St Thomas follows one basic principle; i.e. that actions are specified by objects, or motion by the term toward which it tends. This is an essential part of the Thomistic system of thought. It is also one of the 24 fundamental theses of St Thomas which were accepted by the Congregation of Seminaries (1914) as a safe norm in the teaching of Thomism.

Knowledge, by definition, is knowledge by assembling the precise elements which a thing has in common with other similar phenomena and the precise factor which differentiates it. However, there is a second way in which the mind inquires into the nature of reality, i.e. the further probing of the causes—the whys and wherefores. Since sin falls within the general category of motion, what would normally be the material cause turns out to be the subject in which the motion is located (Question 74). Really, sin has no final cause, but since it is a human action to the extent that there is a final cause, it coincides with the formal cause. Sin as an act of the will is formed or specified by its object which is also the end, goal or final cause. The subsequent questions on causality would all fall in the category of efficient causes or impediments to efficient causality. This volume ends in the middle of this inquiry, since Adam and original sin and the influence of original sin require a separate volume and form a unified treatise which can stand more or less independently.¹

The fortunes of Thomism have waxed and waned through the centuries. Some ages have found the rigorous logic of the scholastics satisfying, some have found it aggravating. However, logic like intelligence is here to stay, the former in the service of the latter. St Thomas' penchant for logic is perfectly consistent with his conception of theology as a science which concentrates on the intelligibility of revelation and with his acceptance of the Augustinian definition of faith as assent with inquiry.²

¹Vol. 26. 1a2ae. 81-5, ed. T. C. O'Brien

²Vol. 1. 1a. 1, ed. T. Gilby