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978-0-521-02948-3 - Summa Theologiae: Volume 40 - Superstition and Irreverence, (2a2ae. 92-100)

Thomas Franklin O'Meara O.P. and Michael John Duffy 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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Archbishop of Dubuque

die 1 Julii 1968

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Latin text and English translation,
Introductions, Notes, Appendices
and Glossaries



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HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI

WAS PLEASED to grant an audience, on 13 December 1963,
to a group, representing the Dominican Editors and the
combined Publishers of the new translation of the *Summa
Theologiae* of St Thomas, led by His Eminence Michael
Cardinal Browne, of the Order of Preachers, and the Most
Reverend Father Aniceto Fernandez, Master General of the
same Order.

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AT THIS AUDIENCE

THE HOLY FATHER made a cordial allocution in which he first welcomed the representatives of a project in which he found particular interest. He went on to laud the perennial value of St Thomas's doctrine as embodying universal truths in so cogent a fashion. This doctrine, he said, is a treasure belonging not only to the Dominican Order but to the whole Church, and indeed to the whole world; it is not merely medieval but valid for all times, not least of all for our own.

His Holiness therefore commended the enterprise of Dominicans from English-speaking Provinces of the Order and of their friends; they were undertaking a difficult task, less because the thought of St Thomas is complicated or his language subtle, than because the clarity of his thought and exactness of language is so difficult to translate. Yet the successful outcome of their efforts would undoubtedly contribute to the religious and cultural well-being of the English-speaking world.

What gave him great satisfaction was the notable evidence of interest in the spread of divine truth on the part of the eminent laymen concerned, members of different communions yet united in a common venture.

For these reasons the Holy Father wished it all success, and warmly encouraged and blessed all those engaged. He was happy to receive the first volume presented to him as a gesture of homage, and promised that he would follow with interest the progress of the work and look forward to the regular appearance of all the subsequent volumes.

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GENERAL PREFACE

BY OFFICIAL APPOINTMENT THE SUMMA PROVIDES THE FRAMEWORK for Catholic studies in systematic theology and for a classical Christian philosophy. Yet the work, which is more than a text-book for professional training, is also the witness of developing tradition and the source of living science about divine things. For faith seeks understanding in the contemplation of God's Logos, his wisdom and saving providence, running through the whole universe.

The purpose, then, of this edition is not narrowly clerical, but to share with all Christians a treasury which is part of their common heritage. Moreover, it consults the interests of many who would not claim to be believers, and yet appreciate the integrity which takes religion into hard thinking.

Accordingly the editors have kept in mind the needs of the general reader who can respond to the reasons in Christianity, as well as of technical theologians and philosophers.

Putting the Latin text alongside the English is part of the purpose. The reader with a smattering of Latin can be reassured when the translator, in order to be clear and readable, renders the thought of St Thomas into the freedom of another idiom without circumlocution or paraphrase.

There are two more reasons for the inclusion of the Latin text. First, to help the editors themselves, for the author's thought is too lissom to be uniformly and flatly transliterated; it rings with analogies, and its precision cannot be reduced to a table of terms. A rigid consistency has not been imposed on the editors of the different volumes among themselves; the original is given, and the student can judge for himself.

Next, to help those whose native tongue is not English or whose duty it is to study theology in Latin, of whom many are called to teach and preach through the medium of the most widespread language of the world, now becoming the second language of the Church.

The Latin is a sound working text, selected, paragraphed, and punctuated by the responsible editor. Important variations, in manuscripts and such major printed editions as the Piana and Leonine, are indicated. The English corresponds paragraph by paragraph and almost always sentence by sentence. Each of the sixty volumes, so far as is possible, will be complete in itself, to serve as a text for a special course or for private study.

THOMAS GILBY O.P.

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[Excepting Latin text of 'DE VITIIS RELIGIONI OPPOSITIS']

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EDITORIAL NOTES

THE TEXT AND TRANSLATION

OF the many editions of the *Summa Theologiae* extant, the nearest to a critical edition is the *Leonine*, commissioned by Pope Leo XIII in 1882. Some of the early volumes are not up to the standard of a truly critical text; however, the text for the *Secunda Pars* is, if not definitive, the best available. This has been used. The variant readings for these nine Questions were studied, yet, in no instance did they seriously disagree with the text offered below.

Something between a literal and free translation has been attempted. Slavish transliteration has been avoided as well as unchanged reproductions of dated examples. On the other hand, in an area of human reflection as serious as this, a colloquial rendering is not desirable. St Thomas himself wrote: 'A good translator ought, while keeping the true meaning of what he is translating, to adapt his style to the genius of the language into which he is translating.'¹

FOOTNOTES

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

In this volume the Notes are fuller than in many of the others, so the reader is recommended to make good use of the Index of Matters.

REFERENCES

Biblical references are to the Vulgate; English translations from the Revised Standard Version. Patristic references are to Migne (PG, Greek Fathers; PL, Latin Fathers). Abbreviations to St Thomas's works are as follows:

Summa Theologiae, without title. Part, question, article, reply; e.g. 1a. 3, 2 ad 3. 1a2ae. 17, 6. 2a2ae. 180, 10. 3a, 35, 8.

Summa Contra Gentiles, CG. Book, chapter; e.g. CG 1, 28.

Scriptum in IV Libros Sententiarum, Sent. Book, distinction, question, article, solution or *quæstiuncula*, reply; e.g. III Sent. 25, 2, 3, ii ad 3.

Compendium Theologiae, *Compend. Theol.*

¹*Contra errores Græcorum*, Proëm.

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Commentaries of Scripture (*lecturæ, expositiones*): Job, *In Job*; Psalms, *In Psal.*; Isaiah, *In Isa.*; Jeremiah, *In Jerem.*; Lamentationes, *In Thren.*; St Matthew, *In Matt.*; St John, *In Joan.*; Epistles of St Paul, e.g. *In Rom.* Chapter, verse, *lectio* as required.

Philosophical commentaries: On the *Liber de Causis*, *In De causis*. Aristotle: *Peri Hermeneias*, *In Periherm.*; Posterior Analytics, *In Poster.*; Physics, *In Physic.*; *De Cælo et Mundo*, *In De Cæl.*; *De Generatione et Corruptione*, *In De gen.*; *Meteorologica*, *In Meteor.*; *De Anima*, *In De anima*; *De Sensu et Sensato*, *In De sensu*; *De Memoria et Remiscentia*, *In De memor.*; Metaphysics, *In Meta.*; Nicomachean Ethics, *In Ethic.*; Politics, *In Pol.* Book, chapter, *lectio* as required, also for Expositions on Boëthius, *Liber de Hebdomadibus* and *Liber de Trinitate*, *In De hebd.* and *In De Trin.*, and on Dionysius, *De Divinis Nominibus*, *In De div. nom.* References to Aristotle give the Bekker annotation.

Qæstiones quodlibetales (de quolibet), Quodl.

Main titles are given in full for other works, including the 10 series of *Questiones Disputatæ*.

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INTRODUCTION

THE *Summa Theologiae* unfolds from a pattern which lies deep in human thought-forms, and which reflects the cyclic nature of things according to myth and philosophy: the Platonic emission and return of the Many from and to the One.

It was St Thomas's purpose to give some order to the theological confusion of his time which had been caused by the rediscovery of Aristotle and the maturing of medieval civilization. He developed a static theological scheme based on the Ten Commandments into an elliptical discourse following the procession of all things from the divine essence, and the culmination of the diversification in man, whose motion back to God made possible by the God-man Christ.

Man is called to the vision of God; man is given a revelation of this calling; man is given Christ who leads and motivates him toward his special destiny. The Christian life, which is Christocentric and eschatological, draws its strength from the cross of Christ and judges all things in terms of its destiny: it is lived in Vatican II's Church on pilgrimage.

The second part of the *Summa* describes how the Christian life develops in a human being. Faith, hope, love, virtues, powers, charisms, gifts of the Spirit—all of these are part of the dynamism. Religion is man's attitude as creature toward his Creator. It need not be specifically Christian; it forms a background against which the Christian faith, commitment, love and service are portrayed. Still, there is a specifically Christian form of religion, in cult, liturgy and sacrament. It is wrong for religious man to turn away from his conscience and serve what he knows are false gods, or creatures passing as deities, or demons. For the people of Israel—Jewish or Christian—it was particularly wicked and ungrateful, for the one true God has disclosed himself to his chosen people, and has revealed himself in his Son, Jesus Christ.

This volume is concerned with acts which distort man's religious needs, drives, and duties toward God. The context, because some of these acts such as idolatry were no more frequent in the thirteenth century than in the twentieth, is that of the Old and the New Covenants. St Thomas looks at these sins in the light of the Bible and salvation-history. Idolatry, superstition, fortune-telling, divination, astrology are perversions of man's natural religious instincts. They are the ways in which man misdirects his religious rites to creatures or to powers of darkness rather than light. To every light there is a shadow side, and these sinful deformities of worship are the shadow side.

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There is a second category of sins against God. Not directly against the worship of the one true God, they are the acts which insult God. They consist in calling God to witness a lie, or buying and selling what is ordained by the Christian religion to help man toward salvation or to give worship to God. This volume, then, falls under two headings, first the misdirecting of religious acts to the created or non-divine; second, the using of God by tempting him and by perjury and simony.

Themes in this Section

In reading through these Questions, several underlying and reappearing characteristics of the perversions of man's owed religious attitude toward his Creator and Redeemer will be noted.

First, religion is primarily interior, but is perfected and executed in the world. Christian faith and life find fulfilment in the visible, tangible liturgy of the Christian community. Vices against religion also involve visible, tangible manifestation. These evil actions insult God by openly swearing falsely; they worship what is powerless and ridiculous rather than divine; they seek from strange and dark but useless sources knowledge of the future.

Secondly, it will be noticed that in the first group of sins (superstition, idolatry, divination, astrology) the centre of the pseudo-religious action is God, ignored or falsified. In the second group (e.g. perjury or simony), the actions centre on man's self-gain. Here God is used for man's safety (perjury) or enrichment (simony). Both of these directions show the antithesis between Christian religion, which is God-centred and man-fulfilling, and the vices which drive towards created objects, whether primitive carved figures or quickly fabricated horoscopes.

Thirdly, the motivation. For the Christian this springs from his own openness to the self-communication of God in Christ. His religion, worship, liturgy are not duties performed out of fear of the law, but the outpouring of Christian existence. For the superstitious and the selfish idolater, whether in primitive or contemporary society, self is the beginning and end. The god, demon, or planet is only a means to self-gain.

Contemporary Relevance

It is perhaps true that as the Church is more firmly implanted in a society, the presence of demonic powers along with idolatry and the infinite varieties of superstition tend to disappear. However, the radical sin-forms of superstition and simony do not disappear; they simply reappear in more sophisticated dress. An increasing number of citizens in the 'secular city' consult daily astrological bulletins, mediums, ouija boards, and other

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purveyors of the occult. What appeal could these primitive forms have to sophisticated contemporary men? Actually, they prey on two of their weaknesses. First, we desire to know, and in this age of anxiety, we have an anxious, fearful, urgent desire to overcome the shadowy existential situation with some kind of certain transcendent knowledge. Secondly, there is a basic hypnotic desire to know what lies outside the barriers of time and death, to know the future, to communicate with the dead. These basic religious needs, when they find no graceful fulfilment in Christ's resurrection, do not die with the entrance of secularism and technology. Our particular kind of society allows them only primitive outlets, once they leave the Jewish or Christian faith. Our superstitions are different from some mentioned in this treatise, but they are all variations on men's basic needs. The astrology in the newspaper is basically the same as that Augustine says he consulted before his intellectual wanderings reached the Gospel. Does idolatry seem to be lacking today? It is present only rarely in devil-worship, but active in subtler forms. Whenever man devotes his entire life, his destiny, and energy to a creature, this is idolatry. There is an idolatry of sensuality, of ambition, of greed. Self is chosen consistently and ultimately as the idol before which truly human action and life is sacrificed.

There is a form of idolatry within the Christian churches where the *status quo*, outmoded formularies and unsuitable institutions can be worshipped as being the only channels of divine favour. The present crises in Christianity witness to a return to essentials, hence, a destroying of the idolatry of arbitrary forms called forth in history to serve religion, but which have become identified with it. Furthermore, in this context of Church renewal, simony can be mentioned. It is unlikely that ecclesiastical offices are bought and sold for money, but it can be asked whether the price of advancement too often is not a will to maintain obsolete privilege.

These rather marginal questions have, then, significance today. There are vast reaches where the Gospel is still unknown, remote areas of emerging nations where man's religious drives find fulfilment only before idols and the demonic. These articles have not lost their import for the secular city with its baffling phenomenon of increased devotion to horoscopes, pseudo-oriental religions, nature cults etc., for they offer basic principles which encompass all these disorientations of the religious drive.

Black illustrates white. By seeing the psychological and theological background of man's religious aberrations, we can appreciate the social and individual dimensions of what we call the 'fallenness' of man; the Johannine tension between the cosmos whose ruler is the prince of darkness, and the cosmos God loves in Jesus (*John* 14, 30; 3, 16); also the Pauline powers of the upper air (*Ephesians* 6, 10). Beyond this we see the original

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patterns of religious duty in man, now enlivened by Christian faith and love. These varied disfigurements (the species of divination are almost without end) are themselves the strongest argument for the inner inclinations of man, conscious and subconscious, free yet dutiful, toward his Maker. This drive is the true origin and, with grace, control of the consequences of religion.

Sources of the Treatise

The Bible is the source of Christian life and of theology. In this section, St Thomas is dealing with material which remains close to these biblical theological sources. The Old Testament is frequently quoted. It is complemented by citations from the Fathers commenting on the books of the Bible. Augustine's writings offer information for understanding questions from comparative religion, while subjects such as perjury and simony treat the medieval canonists as their main source. Aristotle, in his empirical remarks on religion and in his ethical system, offers the reflective background for the Scriptures, the Fathers, and the law of the Church of the Middle Ages.