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I

The Summa Theologica of  
St. Thomas

II

Specimen Pages from the  
Summa

By

D. J. Kennedy, O. P., S. T. M.

C 795.277



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I

# **The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas**

II

## **Specimen Pages from the Summa**

**With Chart in Latin and English**

**By**

**D. J. KENNEDY, O. P., S. T. M.**

**THE ROSARY PRESS**  
Somerset, Ohio  
1915

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## INTRODUCTION

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A *Summa Theologica* is, broadly speaking, a compendium, summary, or manual of theology. There is not in the English language an exact equivalent of the Latin word *Summa* as it was used by medieval writers. Perhaps the words "Complete Manual" would convey best to people using our language the idea which was in the minds of those who invented the Latin term. We always think of a compendium, or summary, as of a book, or *Excerpta*, in which many things are omitted, some of these being either necessary or important. In a *Summa* there must be no such omissions. Things may be left out which properly would find a place only in a complete elucidation and development of a subject considered in all its aspects; but the *Summa* must contain a statement, explanation and proof of all that is necessary for the comprehension of the subject as a whole and in all its essential parts. Some latitude is allowed in the choice of divisions, arguments and illustrations. *Summae* composed by different men treating the same subject may not be similar in all respects. In all cases, however, the doctrine must be complete, briefly stated, sufficiently proved, illustrated and defended. Many such books were composed in the Middle Ages, some dealing with history, some with philosophy, some with theology or kindred subjects, the best known and most important of these being the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas (see *Catholic Encyclopedia*, a. *Summae*).

Nearly six and a half centuries have passed since the death of St. Thomas (d. 1274) and yet his work is still considered the simplest and most perfect sketch of universal theology to be found in any language. Its value is recognized not only by Catholics but also by outsiders, even by the enemies of revealed religion. On this subject readers are referred to the Encyclical Letter, "Aeterni Patris," of Leo XIII and to the article "Thomas Aquinas, Saint," in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*. St. Thomas' renowned work is a *Summa* in the best sense of the word. In it nothing is superfluous, nothing is wanting. It is a compendious, but complete, exposition of Sacred Doctrine, written in language so clear and concise that one is in constant admiration of the genius and sanctity of one who could express so well his knowledge of God and all things pertaining to God. Pope Pius X, shortly before his death, viz., in June, 1914, issued a document imposing the obliga-

tion of using the *Summa* of St. Thomas as the text-book in all higher schools in Italy and the adjacent islands which enjoyed the privilege of conferring academic degrees in theology. All institutions failing to comply with the Pontifical order within three years will be deprived of the power to confer degrees. It is not probable that Benedict XV, an admirer of Leo XIII and a friend of Pius X, will revoke or modify the decree of his saintly predecessor. The *Summa* of St. Thomas is still a living and a valuable book.

The following pages cannot claim to be even a good summary of its merits and excellencies; they are simply a few pertinent remarks which will be interesting, it is hoped, and modestly helpful to two classes of readers. For students of theology they will serve as an introduction and an incentive to deeper study of a work which cannot be fully known and appreciated until the general plan and all details of the execution have been examined in a close and reverent inspection of the immortal pages penned by the Angelic Doctor. For those who are not students of theology these sketches will furnish a coveted peep into the treasury where so many riches are said to be stored. To those who are not familiar with the Latin language the *Summa* of St. Thomas has been as a sealed book. Translations of the full text into French and English are now in course of publication (see *Catholic Encyclopedia*, l. c.) and soon will afford our laymen an opportunity to learn more about the great medieval theologian's immortal work. For the benefit of both classes of readers it has been considered opportune to publish the plan of the *Summa* both in Latin and English. The chart on pages 18 and 19 gives in St. Thomas' own words the plan which he followed in writing on God in Himself, and on God as the Alpha and Omega—the beginning and end of all things, especially of rational beings. The same plan, translated into English is given on page 39. These two charts, in their wonderful simplicity and grandeur, are more valuable than any words of explanation and comment. For the benefit of those who desire to know more about St. Thomas and his *Summa* there is added (p. 36) a short bibliography which will be helpful both to students and general readers. Sincere thanks are due to the Editor of the *Catholic University Bulletin* for the permission, graciously granted, to reprint the following pages.

## THE SUMMA THEOLOGICA OF ST. THOMAS\*

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**T**HE *Summa and the Catechism*.—"The Catholic Church," writes Ozanam, a distinguished modern author, "possesses two incomparable monuments, the Catechism and the *Summa Theologica* (Sum of Theology) of St. Thomas Aquinas; one is for the unlettered (persons of ordinary capacity), the other is for the learned." The truth of this remark is admitted by all theologians who have studied and examined the *Summa* of St. Thomas after having learned, as we must learn, the outlines of the Christian religion from that dear little book, the Catechism. The Catechism contains a compendious enumeration and short explanations of the principal doctrines of the Christian religion; the *Summa* of St. Thomas contains a complete list of those same doctrines, explained and developed and defended by the genius of a Master who is universally recognized as the "Prince of Theologians." Had St. Thomas written nothing but his theology, his name would have been immortal, because nothing new is said in stating that the *Summa Theologica* is universally admitted to be the greatest masterpiece of human genius that the world has ever known. This work contains the cream of St. Thomas' philosophy and theology, being in reality a résumé, or sum, of all his other writings; it represents the perfection of the human mind in its application to the truths of faith, the perfection of Christian philosophy and theology. Those who read it are filled with enthusiastic admiration for the author, and they know not which should be more admired, the grandeur of the plan or the extraordinary genius manifested in the execution of the grand conception.

*Lacordaire compares the Summa to the Pyramids*.—"Shall I attempt," exclaims Fr. Lacordaire, speaking of St. Thomas, "shall I attempt to describe this man and his work? As well might I attempt to give a perfect idea of the pyramids by telling their height and breadth. If you wish to know the pyramids, be not content with listening to a description; cross the seas; go to the land where so many conquerors have left their footprints; go into the sandy deserts, and there behold standing before you something solemn, something grand, something calm, immutable and

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\*Reprinted from the *Catholic University Bulletin*, Vol. XV, No. 4.

profoundly simple—the pyramids!” St. Thomas’ *Summa*, in its majestic simplicity may well be compared to the grandest of the pyramids. We may look upon it with admiring eyes; but no tongue can tell, no pen can adequately describe the wonders of its simple grandeur; it is the masterpiece of a genius who has had neither a superior nor an equal. This great manual of theology comes to us from that much maligned thirteenth century, of which Vaughan writes: “The masterpieces of medieval science were produced at the very time that the great architectural masterpieces were conceived and at least partially realized.”\* The thirteenth century was an age of construction as well as of destruction. The men of those days upset and destroyed many idols of preceding centuries; but in their stead they constructed imperishable monuments both in the material and in the intellectual world, which to this day excite the unbounded admiration of all lovers of true genius; and the architects of our day would be happy if they could produce something worthy of being compared to the great cathedrals and churches and libraries and town-halls which were conceived and executed by the architects of the Middle Ages. This is in a special manner true of the greatest of all masterpieces of medieval science, the *Summa* of St. Thomas. No writer of theology has attempted to make an improvement upon this greatest of all manuals of theology. The Church, guided by the Holy Ghost, has held her councils and has issued instructions and definitions to which not even the most enthusiastic admirer of St. Thomas would dare compare his writings when there is question of a teacher that is infallible as well as accurate; but it is a fact well known to theologians that many of those definitions were taken almost verbatim from the works of St. Thomas. Amongst men the *Summa* has been looked upon as the groundwork and model for all theologies written since his time, and the greatest praise that could be bestowed upon any philosophy or theology consists in saying that the book really deserves to bear on the title-page the inscription: “ad mentem D. Thomae”—in other words, that it was formed on the model of St. Thomas and really represents his teachings.

*When did St. Thomas resolve to write the Summa?*—It is impossible to determine at what epoch in his lifetime St. Thomas resolved to write the *Summa*. We know that in his infancy those who cared for him were frequently astonished on hearing the child ask, with unexpected seriousness, “What is God?” It may be supposed that

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\**Life and Labours of St. Thomas of Aquin* (2 vols., London, 1871-1872), Vol. I. p. 345.

thus early in life grace was perfecting nature in this favored child, preparing him gradually to become in due time the most distinguished representative of that science which takes its name from God, of whom it treats.\* His sojourn at Monte Casino, his studies at Naples, his reading of the Scriptures and of Aristotle, his study of the "Sentences," in which Peter Lombard gave a compendium of the most important texts of the Fathers relating to theology, his training under Albertus Magnus, who was deeply impressed with the order and accuracy of Aristotle's writings, and who was himself fond of experimenting and of collecting materials for rebuilding the edifice of philosophy and theology—all this tended to prepare St. Thomas for giving to the world what Ozanam calls "a vast synthesis of the moral sciences, in which was unfolded all that could be known of God, of man, and their mutual relations, a truly Catholic philosophy."†

*Origin of the Summa:*—In subsequent articles something will be said of the chaos produced at Paris and elsewhere by the introduction of new studies and new methods into the universities. With brilliant professors anxious to obtain fame by giving their names to new systems, with Averroes' commentaries on Aristotle regarded at Paris as the perfection of philosophical knowledge, with rationalism and pantheism publicly taught by professors of a Catholic university, with contempt for old systems and the love of novelty growing in the minds of men, while the sweet and pious mystics of the school of St. Victor sought to induce men to give up "philosophy and empty fallacies" in order to return to the contemplation of heavenly truths and the study of the Scriptures, there was a confusion that puzzled even learned theologians, and poor beginners could do nothing but follow the systems of their masters.

*Influence of Albertus Magnus on St. Thomas:*—St. Thomas was a witness of this confusion. He had not suffered as much as others from the disordered state of philosophy and theology, because he had enjoyed the advantage of being instructed under a master whose clear vision was not dimmed by the darkness which surrounded him. Albertus Magnus—"Honor to whom honor is due"—pointed out to St. Thomas the dangers and the needs of the thirteenth century, and to him principally, under God, we are indebted for the immortal *Summa*. Although St. Thomas himself had not experienced the difficulties under which others labored, he knew what those difficulties were, and he resolved with all due humility,

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\* Vaughan, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 96.

† Drane, *Christian Schools and scholars* (London, 1881). p. 430.



and with the hope of assistance from heaven, to write a book that would be a remedy for the confusion and uncertainty which prevented students from forming a clear conception of the doctrines of Christianity.

*The Summa was written for Beginners:*—In making this statement there is no necessity of drawing upon the imagination or of resorting to *ex post facto* suppositions. St. Thomas himself tells us—the declaration will perhaps surprise those who hear it for the first time—that his *Summa* was written for the special benefit of students, of beginners, as we call them. This declaration was made in the Prologue to the *Summa*. “We have reflected,” he writes, “that beginners in this sacred science find many impediments in those things which have been written by divers authors; partly on account of the multiplication of useless questions, articles and arguments, partly because those things which are necessary for the education of novices are not treated according to the order of discipline (scientific order), but as the exposition of certain books or the occasion of dispute demanded, and partly because the frequent repetitions beget confusion and disgust in the minds of the learners.” Those “impediments,” or trials of beginners as we may call them, St. Thomas wished to avoid, hence he adds: “I shall endeavor, trusting to the assistance of heaven, to treat of those things that pertain to this sacred science with brevity and with clearness, in so far as the subject to be treated will permit.”\*

These are St. Thomas’ few plain and simple words of introduction to his immortal Sum of all theology. They contain a promise, and never was a promise more faithfully fulfilled. He did not write simply in order to explain or refute books that had been written before his time. He did not wish to make a show of learning by heaping up useless questions and arguments, thereby causing great confusion in the minds of his readers. No, with humble confidence in the Almighty, he intended to use the talents that God had given him to compose a complete, but at the same time brief and lucid, exposition of the truths made known by revelation. In other words, he promised to write a scientifically arranged theology, and he fulfilled his promise in such a manner as to become the Prince and Master of all theologians, with no one to dispute his claim to the title.

*Question I. Sacred Doctrine:*—After these few preliminary remarks, which, by the way, contain more than many a long-winded preface, as prefaces are often written, the Angelic Doctor enters

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\* Prologue to the *Summa*.

into the consideration of his subject, beginning with an introductory question on Sacred Doctrine, by which term he means either revelation in general, or theology in particular.

Besides philosophy which can be known by reason, he says, revelation is also necessary for the human race, first, because without revelation men could know nothing of the supernatural end to which they must tend, and secondly, without revelation even the truths concerning God which could be proved by reason, would be known only by a few, after a long time and with the admixture of many errors (Art. 1, cf. Vat. Council, Const. "Dei Filius," C. 2).

*What is Scholastic Theology?*—The principles of revelation having been once received, the mind of man proceeds to explain them and to draw conclusions from what was revealed. From this results in man's mind theology properly so-called, which is a science, speculative and practical, higher in dignity than the other sciences, deserving to be called wisdom, because the principles from which it proceeds are made known by revelation which manifests God as the highest cause of all things (art 2, 3, 4, 5, 6). The object, or subject, of this science is God; all other things are treated in it only in so far as they relate to God (art 7). Reason is used in theology not to prove the truths of faith—which are accepted on the authority of God—but to defend, explain and develop the doctrines which have been revealed (art. 8). Revelation is made known to us by the Sacred Scriptures. God, the author of the Scriptures, embraces all things in His infinite mind; and when He deigns to speak to man, if we take into account the intention of God, considering the spiritual or mystical as well as the literal sense of the words, a single text of Scripture may contain a world of meaning (art. 9, 10).

*Plan of the Summa:*—Having laid down these principles, St. Thomas announces the order he intends to observe in his theology. This is one of the most important features of the *Summa*. In ten lines of a half column, as the words are printed in the Migne edition of his works, the Angel of the Schools sketches that wonderful plan which introduced unity into all theological treatises. Under three headings he classifies all the parts of dogmatic and moral theology; not one of them can be omitted in a complete theology; it is not necessary to add another, because they embrace everything, they cover the whole field.

*General Outlines:*—Now, what are those three headings, those three leading ideas? "Since the principal object of sacred doctrine is to give the knowledge of God, not only as He is in Himself but also as He is the *Beginning* of all things and the *End* of them all,

especially of rational beings, we shall treat first, of God; secondly, of the tendency of the rational creature to God, and thirdly, of Christ, who as man is the way by which we tend to God." This is the grand division, these are the general outlines of the *Summa Theologica*. God in Himself and as He is the Creator; God as the End of all things, especially of man; God as the Redeemer—these are the leading ideas under which all that pertains to theology is contained.

*Subdivision; 1a Pars*.—The first part, of God in Himself and of God as Creator, is subdivided into three tracts. (1) Of those things which pertain to the essence of God, (2) the distinction of persons in God, *i. e.*, on the Trinity, (3) of the procession of creatures from God; under which St. Thomas treats (1) of the production of creatures, (2) of the distinction of creatures, (3) of the preservation and government of creatures. Under the heading of the distinction, he treats of the distinction of creatures, (1) in general and (2) in particular, *i. e.*, of good and evil, of creatures that are purely spiritual (the angels), of creatures that are purely corporeal (the material world), and of man, who is composed of body and spirit. This makes in all nine tracts in the first part: (1) On the essence of the one God. (2) On the Trinity. (3) On the creation. (4) On the distinction of things in general. (5) On the distinction of good and evil. (6) On the angels. (7) On purely corporeal creatures. (8) On man. (9) On the preservation and government of the world.

*2a Pars*. The second part, which treats of the tendency of rational creatures to God, *i. e.*, of God as He is the end of man, contains the moral theology of St. Thomas or his treatise on the end of man and on human acts. It is subdivided into two parts known as the 1a 2ae and the 2a 2ae, or the First of the Second and the Second of the Second. The first five questions of the 2a pars are devoted to proving that man's last end, or his beatitude, consists in the possession of God. Man attains to that end or deviates from it by human acts, of which he treats, first in the general (in all but the first five questions of the *prima secundae*), secondly, in particular (in the whole of the 2a 2ae).

The treatise on human acts in general is divided into two parts, (1) on human acts in themselves, (2) on the principles or causes of those acts. Of the acts performed by man some are peculiar to him as man, others are common to him and the lower animals; hence St. Thomas speaks, (1) of human acts, (2) of the passions. Here I may pause to remark that in these two tracts,

St. Thomas, following Aristotle, gives the most perfect description and the keenest analysis of the movements of man's mind and heart that ever came from the pen of man.

The principles (or causes) of human acts are *intrinsic* or *extrinsic*. The intrinsic principles are the *faculties* of the soul and *habits*. The faculties of the soul were explained in the first part, in treating of the soul of man; hence in the *prima secundae* St. Thomas considers habits, first, in general, then, in particular, *i. e.*, the virtues and vices, in explaining which his power of analysis is again displayed in a remarkable manner. The extrinsic principles of human acts are *the devil* who tempts us, and *God*, who instructs us by His *laws* and moves us by His *grace*. Of the temptation of the demons St. Thomas treated in the first part, when he was explaining God's manner of governing the world. The *prima secundae* closes with the treatise on laws and on grace.

2a 2ae. The second part of the second treats of the virtues and vices in particular. In it St. Thomas treats first of those things which pertain to *all men*, no matter what may be their station in life; secondly, of those things which pertain to *some men* only. Things that pertain to all men are reduced by St. Thomas to seven headings: Faith, Hope and Charity—the three *theological virtues*—Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance—the four *cardinal* or principal moral virtues. Under each title St. Thomas, in order, as he himself tells us, to avoid frequent repetitions, treats not only of the virtue itself, but also of the vices opposed to it, of the commandment given to practice it, and of the gift of the Holy Ghost which corresponds to it. Under the second heading—of those things which pertain to some men only—St. Thomas treats first of the *graces freely given* by Almighty God, to certain individuals for the good of the Church, such as the gift of tongues, prophecy, the power to work miracles, etc. Secondly, of the *active and contemplative life*. Thirdly, of *particular states* in life, and of the duties of those who are in different stations, especially of bishops and religious.

3a Pars. In the third part of his *Summa*, St. Thomas treats of our Blessed Redeemer and of the benefits which he confers upon man; hence the three tracts; first, on the *Incarnation* and on what our Saviour did and suffered when He was on earth; second, on the *Sacraments*, which were instituted by our Saviour and have their efficacy from His merits and sufferings; and the third, on the *end of the world*, the resurrection of our bodies, judgment, the

punishment of the wicked, and the everlasting happiness of those who through the merits of Christ are brought back to the bosom of God.

These are the grand outlines of the *Summa*, which was the first, and which remains to this day the most perfect, scientifically arranged theology that was ever written. I have said nothing of the subdivisions under each grand heading; they bear the impress of the same all-embracing and penetrating mind which conceived the general plan. The *Summa* contains 38 tracts, 631 questions and about 3000 articles, in which more than 10,000 objections are answered. Take up any one of these articles, and by referring to the beginning of the treatise you can see at a glance what place it occupies in the general plan, which embraces all that can be known of God, of man, and of their mutual relations. This scientific arrangement of questions is one of the most prominent features of the *Summa*, and the making out of this plan was in itself a greater benefit to theology than anything that had been done before or has been done since the time of St. Thomas. Writers who preceded St. Thomas had deserved well of religion and of the Church; they had written wisely and well, and to some of those who immediately preceded him or were contemporary with him, must be given the credit of having prepared the way for the *Summa* by collecting the materials which he moulded into one vast synthesis; but they had not written a scientific theology. Those who came after St. Thomas have deemed it an honor and a pleasure to follow the order of the *Summa*. They may have added some new developments or cited some facts and definitions which came after the thirteenth century, but they have never dreamed of attempting to write a better theology. St. Thomas remains the master and the model; the nearer they approach to him, the better right they have to be considered good theologians.

It must not be supposed, however, that all the excellencies of the *Summa* have been enumerated when the general plan has been pointed out and a short list has been given of the principal questions treated in it. St. Thomas was not only a great architect, he was also a practical builder and he attended with the greatest diligence to every detail of the grand edifice which he constructed. Reading over his works we involuntarily exclaim: Verily Pope John XXII expressed a truth when he said that St. Thomas wrought as many miracles as he wrote articles.

*The Style of the Summa*.—Let us consider, for instance, the style of his writings. The style of St. Thomas is something unique and inimitable; it is a most extraordinary combination of brevity,

accuracy and completeness. The scholastics generally were not so careful of style as were their predecessors in the learned world; they were more solicitous about their thoughts than about the language in which their ideas were expressed. Hence the lamentations of John of Salisbury, who was a finished classical scholar and a writer of elegantly polished letters.\* St. Thomas' style is a medium between the rough expressiveness of the ordinary scholastic and the almost fastidious elegance of John of Salisbury. We know that his hymns in honor of the Blessed Sacrament are incomparably grand and beautiful. Santeuil said he would give all the verses he ever wrote for the following words of the "Verbum Supernum," which immediately precede the "O Salutaris":

"Se nascens dedit socium  
Convalescens in edulium  
Se moriens in pretium  
Se regnans dat in praeium."

"In birth, man's Fellowman was he,  
His Meat, while sitting at the Board  
He died, his Ransomer to be  
He reigns to be his Great Reward."†

But I am speaking of his style of writing on philosophy and theology, concerning which Pope Innocent declared that, with the exception of the canonical writings, the works of St. Thomas surpass all others in accuracy of expression. In a few well chosen words he tells all that one wishes to know on a question, and after reading all that others have written, students return to St. Thomas, who always gives something satisfactory. No one can appreciate this without actually reading the writings of St. Thomas. For the sake of comparison I should like to see some modern authors attempt to put into a given space as much accurate and satisfactory information as St. Thomas usually gives in the space of one article. Bossuet, Lacordaire and Monsabré, three of the greatest of authors, studied and admired St. Thomas' style, and in reading their discourses we can recognize the influence of the Angelic Doctor. Writers on philosophy and theology have studied his style; they could not imitate it, because it is *sui generis*, possessing an excellence which makes it inimitable. Cajetan knew his style better than any of his disciples, yet Cajetan is beneath St. Thomas in clearness and accuracy of expression, in depth and solidity of judgment.

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\* Drane, *op. cit.*, pp. 358-359.

† Translation by Marquis of Bute.

*Sound Judgment:*—This soundness and soberness of judgment is another characteristic of St. Thomas. It is a well known fact that St. Thomas was noted for his singular calmness and meekness; even under the most trying circumstances he never lost his temper, notwithstanding the many provocations he met with in his life as a student, as a professor, and as a champion of the religious orders against the malicious attacks of William of St. Amour. This quiet self-possession runs through all his writings, so much so that every candid reader, even though he paid no attention to the supernatural meekness and humility of a saintly disciple of Jesus, would be compelled to admire him as a perfect specimen of the philosopher with a well-balanced mind. St. Thomas was full of what we take delight in praising as good, sound sense. He and Albertus Magnus introduced new methods into the schools. Besides praising and making known the works of Aristotle, upon which some looked with suspicion, they insisted on the necessity of experiment and observation in an age when men too often contented themselves with reading what had been written by others.

In philosophy, says St. Thomas, arguments from authority are of secondary importance (2 Sent. Dist. 14, Art. 2, ad. 1); experiment, and reason the thing out for yourself, and do not swear by the words of a master. "Philosophy does not consist in knowing what men said but in knowing the truth." We now understand the importance of this principle; perhaps we should not have understood it so well, and might not have proposed it so courageously had we lived in the middle of the thirteenth century.\* The good judgment of St. Thomas is displayed in a remarkable manner in settling disputed questions. If he tells you that he is certain of the truth of his solution, you may rest assured that his arguments are convincing; otherwise he will simply give an opinion, stating that it is probable or more probable than the opposite; or he will admit that the question is doubtful, and then he suspends judgment. He does not hesitate at times to say plainly: This is something about which we know nothing, differing in this from many of his time and of our times who foolishly imagine that it is unphilosophical to say: "I don't know." On reflection we know that judgments should be formed in accordance with the nature of the arguments adduced, but as a matter of fact very few writers observe this rule. St. Thomas observed it

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\* See *Aeterni Patris*.

invariably, and for this reason he has always been considered a safe guide, because he judged always in justice and in truth.

*No Excellence without Labor*.—It would be a mistake to suppose that St. Thomas attained to this perfection of scholastic writing without an effort, and that he affords an exception to the general rule expressed in the old saying: "There is no excellence without labor." He was indeed a singularly blessed genius, but he was also an indefatigable worker, and by continued application he reached that stage of perfection in the art of writing where the art disappears. Some years ago the Abbé Ucceli published a facsimile of the original manuscript of the *Summa Contra Gentiles*. The text was corrected and changed in almost as many places as it remained intact, thus proving that even the genius of St. Thomas was not dispensed from the law of labor in attaining to excellence.

Another remarkable feature of the *Summa* is St. Thomas' wonderful knowledge of the Scriptures, of the Councils of the Church, of the Works of the Fathers and the writings of the philosophers. He seems to have read everything and to have understood everything. Father Daniel d'Agusta once pressed him to say what he considered the greatest grace he had ever received from God (sanctifying grace, of course, excepted). "I think, that of having understood whatever I have read," he replied, after a few minutes of reflection. St. Antoninus says in his life, that "he remembered everything he had once read, so that his mind was like a huge library." Whoever has read the *Summa* will at once admit the truth of these statements.

*Scripture*.—St. Thomas must have known by heart the greater portion of the Scriptures. There is scarcely an article of the *Summa* that does not contain quotations from the Scriptures, and frequently he takes pains to explain the meaning of obscure passages. It must be borne in mind that he wrote at a time when there was no such book as a "Concordance," or a "Thesaurus Biblicus," or "Divine Armory of the Holy Scriptures," or other books of that kind which make it easy for writers of our times to fill their pages with quotations from the holy writings. Not only did he know the Scriptures themselves, he was also acquainted with the Commentaries on the sacred text; and whenever it was necessary or useful, he was prepared to give the different opinions of various authors, sometimes refuting their interpretations, sometimes leaving the reader free to choose for himself from several interpretations, all of which were considered equally good. The bare enumeration of texts quoted or explained in the *Summa* fills eighty small-print columns in the Migne edition of his works, and



it is supposed by many that St. Thomas learned the Scriptures by heart while he was imprisoned in the Castle of St. Giovanni, shortly after he received the habit of the Order of St. Dominic.

*Tradition:*—He was also filled with the deepest veneration for all the traditions of the Church. He was a man of intense faith, and no arguments had greater weight with him than those taken from the "*consuetudo ecclesiae*"—the practice of the Church, which, he said, should prevail over the authority of any Doctor (2a 2ae, Q. X. A. 12). This same spirit of faith is manifested in his quotations from the Acts of Councils, the Definitions of the Roman Pontiffs, and the works of the Holy Fathers. His acquaintance with these important sources of theological arguments is astonishing, especially when we remember that books were very rare and precious in his time—two centuries before the invention of printing. In the *Summa Theologica* he quotes from nineteen Councils, forty-one Popes, and fifty-two Fathers of the Church or learned Doctors. Among the Fathers, his favorite is St. Augustine, whose opinions, however, he does not always adopt, when St. Augustine puts forth a private opinion and is not bearing witness to a doctrine that was handed down from the ancients. In departing from St. Augustine's opinion he usually, through respect for that Father, refrains from mentioning his name, preferring that his readers should not be unnecessarily reminded of the fact that even St. Augustine made some mistakes.

*Philosophers:*—In the introduction to the *Summa*, St. Thomas lays down the principle that a theologian can make use of the writings of philosophers, not indeed as if theology needed them, but because she has the right to use them as her servants (Q. 1, Art. 5 ad 2) in order to illustrate the truth of faith (Q. 1, Art. 8 ad 2). Acting on this principle he extensively used the works of the pagan philosophers and poets in order to render more intelligible and attractive his explanations of Christian doctrines and practices. In the *Summa* he quotes from the writings of forty-six philosophers and poets, Aristotle, Plato and Boethius being his favorite authorities. From Aristotle he learned that love of order and accuracy of expression which are the most conspicuous features of the *Summa*. From Boethius he learned that Aristotle's works could be used without detriment to Christianity; and in the works of that philosopher he found several exact definitions which he adopted, and which are still used in the schools of theology (def. of Person and of Eternity). He did not follow Boethius in his vain attempt to reconcile Plato and Aristotle. St.

Thomas saw that the teachings of those two great philosophers were not the same, especially in regard to the nature of universal ideas and the union of the soul and body in man. He adopted Aristotle's doctrines on those subjects, and in general the Stagirate was his master; but the elevation and grandeur of St. Thomas' conceptions, and the majestic dignity which characterizes all his writings speak to us of the great and sublime Plato, who would have been greater than Aristotle, had he condescended to descend to facts rather than to soar aloft, even unto the Divinity, on the wings of sublime theories. St. Thomas is as sublime as Plato, and more reliable than Aristotle, because Aristotle lacked the light of Christian faith, which alone can safely guide the human mind through the intricacies and obscurities of philosophy. St. Thomas then, is the Christian Aristotle, the greatest of all philosophers, and the Prince of Theologians. The importance and value of his *Summa*, which I have very imperfectly described, pointing out in a general way a few of its excellencies, were recognized and admitted as soon as it became known, and shortly after his death the *Summa* supplanted the Book of Sentences of Peter Lombard which for years had been the favorite text-book in the theological schools of the Middle Ages.

*Popes, Universities and Religious Orders:*—Roman Pontiffs, the universities and religious Orders vied with one another in sounding the praises of the Angelic Doctor. The universities and many religious Orders bound themselves to follow his doctrine, of which Pope Innocent VI said: "Those who followed it never deviated from the path of truth; those who attacked it were always suspected of error." Heretics (Beza, Bucer) unwillingly proclaimed his greatness by boasting that if his works were removed they could destroy the Catholic Church. "The hope indeed was vain, but the testimony has its value," writes Leo XIII (*Act. Patris*).

*Councils—Council of Trent:*—The greatest praise that can be bestowed upon St. Thomas is to be found in the history of the General Councils of the Church. "In the Councils of Lyons, Vienne, Florence, and in the Vatican Council," writes Leo XIII, "you might say that St. Thomas was present in the deliberations and decrees of the Fathers and, as it were, presided over them, contending against the errors of the Greeks, the heretics, the rationalists, with overpowering force and the happiest results. And it was an honor reserved to St. Thomas alone, and shared by none of the other Doctors of the Church, that the Fathers of Trent in their hall of assembly decided to place on the altar side

# SUMMA THEOLOGICA

## Totius Summae Theologicae

Quia principalis intentio hujus sacrae doctrinae est Dei cognitionem tradere, et non solum *secundum* quod in se est, sed etiam *secundum* quod est *Principium* et *Finis* omnium rerum et specialiter rationalis creaturae, ad hujus doctrinae expositionem intendimus tractare:—

## Per tres partes in tractatus xxxviii divisio adequata

De sacra doctrina qualis sit et ad quae se extendat—Omnia pertractantur in sacra doctrina ordinem ad Deum.

1. De Deo. Consideratio tripartita:	PARS Ia.	1a. De iis quae ad Essentiam Divinam pertinent.	1a. De Productione Creaturarum	1a. De Distinctione Rerum in generali	a. De Distinctione Rerum in generali
		2a. De iis quae pertinent ad Distinctionem Personarum	2a. De Distinctione Creaturarum	2. De Distinctione Rerum in speciali	b. De Distinctione Rerum in speciali
		3a. De iis quae pertinent ad Processionem Creaturarum a Deo et quidem tripartita erit consideratio:	3a. De Conservatione et Gubernatione Creaturarum		

### De Ultimo Fine humanae vitae

2. De Motu Rationalis Creaturae in Deum Consideratio bipartita Occurrit considerandum:	PARS IIa.	In universali.	1. De ipsis actibus.	Humanorum actuum quidam proprii: quidam homini et caeteris communes. Et quia Beati primum (rationalis) hominis bonum quius se habent ad illum actus habent quam illi qui homini et caeteris sunt communes.	
			2. De principis actuum.	a. De principis actuum intrinsicis.	Principium intrinsecum et habitus. Sed de ultimo est in l. p. restat considerandum.
1. De ultimo fine humanae vitae. 2. De his per quae homo ad finem pervenire potest vel ab eo deviare scilicet de actibus humanis. Sed quia operationes et actus circa singularia sunt, ideo omnis operativa scientia in particulari consideratione perficitur; moralis igitur consideratio quae est humanorum actuum tradenda est:	PARS IIIa.	In speciali.	1. De his quae pertinent ad omnium status (virtutes et vitia opposita ad omnes homines spectantia.)	b. De principis actuum extrinsecis.	Principium extrinsecum et moralis per quod ad malum est a.
			2. De his quae spectant ad aliquos homines specialiter.		a. De virtutibus theologis. b. De virtutibus cardinalibus. c. De diversis.

3. De Christo qui secundum quod est homo via est nobis tendendi in Deum.	PARS IIIa.	Quia Salvator Noster Dominus Noster Jesus Christus, teste angelo, populum suum salvum faciens a peccatis eorum, viam veritatis in seipso nobis demonstravit, per quam ad beatitudinem immortalis vitae resurgendo pervenire possumus, necesse est ut ad consummationem totius theologiae, post considerationem ultimi finis humanae vitae et virtutum et vitiorum, de Ipso omnium Salvatore et de beneficiis ejus nostra consideratio consequatur; circa quam considerandum occurrit.		1. De Ipso Salvatore, i. e., de eo qui nostrum actus sunt.	a. In generali
				2. De Sacramentis quae ab Ipso Verbo Incarnato efficaciam habent.	b. In speciali
				3. De fine Immortalis Vitae et de resurgendo pervenire.	

### 3. THOMAE AQUINATIS

sub ratione Dei vel quia sunt ipse Deus vel quia habent	Ia. P.
1. De Sacra Doctrina.....	Qu. i
2. De Deo Uno.....	Qq. ii-xxvi
3. De Sanctissima Trinitate.....	Qq. xxvii-xxliii
4. De Creatione.....	Qq. xxliii-xxvii
5. De Distinctione Rerum in Communi.....	Qq. xxvii-xxliii
6. De Distinctione Boni et Mali.....	Qq. xxliii-xxlix
7. De Angelis.....	Qq. l-lxiv
8. De Creatura pure Corporali.....	Qq. lxxv-lxxiv
9. De Homine.....	Qq. lxxv-cii
10. De Conservatione et Gubernat.....	Qq. ciii-cxix
	I. II. P.
11. De Fine Ultimo et de Beatitudine.....	Qq. i-v
12. De Actibus Humanis.....	Qq. vi-xxi
13. De Passionibus.....	Qq. xxii-xlvi
14. De Habitibus in Genere.....	Qq. xlix-liv
15. De Virtutibus.....	Qq. lv-lxx
16. De Vitiis et Peccatis.....	Qq. lxxi-lxxxix
17. De Legibus.....	Qq. xc-cviii
18. De Gratia.....	Qq. cix-cxiv
	II. II. P.
19. De Fide.....	Qq. i-xvi
20. De Spe.....	Qq. xvii-xxii
21. De Caritate.....	Qq. xxiii-xxvi
22. De Prudentia.....	Qq. xxvii-lvi
23. De Justitia.....	Qq. lxvii-cxxii
24. De Fortitudine.....	Qq. cxxiii-cxl
25. De Temperantia.....	Qq. cxli-clxx
26. De Gratiis gratis Datis.....	Qq. clxxi-clxxxiii
27. De Vita Activa et Contempla- tiva.....	Qq. clxxxix-clxxxii
28. De Variis Officiis et Sta- tibus Hominum.....	Qq. clxxxiii-clxxxix
	III. P.
29. De Incarnatione.....	Qq. i-lxx
30. De Sacramentis in genere.....	Qq. lx-lxx
31. De Baptismo.....	Qq. lxxi-lxxv
32. De Confirmatione.....	Qq. lxxvi-lxxii
33. De Sma Eucharistia.....	Qq. lxxiii-lxxxiii
34. De Poenitentia.....	Qq. lxxxiv-xc Sup. I-xxviii
35. De Extrema Unctione.....	Qq. xxxix-xxli
36. De Ordine.....	Qq. xxxiv-xl
37. De Matrimonio.....	Qq. xli-lxviii
38. De Resurrectione et Novissimis.....	Qq. lxix-xxix

by side with the Holy Scriptures and the Decrees of the Roman Pontiffs the *Summa* of St. Thomas, to seek in it counsel, arguments and decisions for their purpose" (*ib*).

*Vatican Council*:—I have heard it related, on very good authority, that at the Vatican Council the Bishop who was considered one of the best theologians among the assembled Fathers, was Mgr. Gill, Archbishop of Saragossa, afterwards Cardinal. Pius IX spoke of him as "the oracle of the council," and always asked him to give an opinion before the decrees were put to a final vote. The Archbishop afterwards, replying to the congratulations of his brethren in religion, humbly protested that if he had said anything of value during the sessions of the Council, all the glory should be attributed to St. Thomas "because," he said, "whatever I may know about theology I learned from my two favorite books, the *Summa* of St. Thomas and the treatise "*De Locis Theologicis* of Melchior Canus" (a disciple of St. Thomas).

Nothing more than this simple fact is required to prove the wisdom of Pope Leo XIII in calling upon his children throughout the world to study the works and the method of St. Thomas. The reasons for this action of the Supreme Pontiff are set forth at length in the Encyclical *Aeterni Patris*. Permit me to remark that, even from what has been said in these imperfect sketches of St. Thomas' influence on religious thought, it is evident that in his works are to be found the principles which would destroy the principal intellectual evils of our times, Rationalism, Indifferentism, and the foolish belief that there is a conflict between faith and science. St. Thomas' career and every page of his writings are a contradiction and a standing refutation of those errors. His works, indeed, should not be studied now as they would have been used in the thirteenth century; they should be adapted to the needs of the twentieth century. His principles and his methods are suited to all times, because, as Father Lacordaire remarks, granting that he has not foreseen and refuted all errors, he has said all that was necessary to refute them.\*

*Should the Summa be considered a Miracle*:—If you ask: How did it happen that this man, living six hundred years ago, wrote a theology suited to the needs of all times? I answer, in the words of Pope John XXII: "*Doctrina ejus non potuit esse sine miraculo*"—"His learning cannot be explained without admitting a miracle."

D. J. KENNEDY, O. P.

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\* Vallet, *Histoire de la Philosophie* (Paris, 1886), p. 246.

## SPECIMEN PAGES FROM THE SUMMA THEOLOGICA OF ST. THOMAS\*

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**I**N a preceding article (*Cath. Univ. Bulletin*, April 1909), an attempt was made to give a general view of the *Summa* of St. Thomas. The grand outlines of this great monument of human genius were pointed out in a hurried description; we did not pause to consider the many beautiful details of the grand structure. We passed along the street as it were and cast a glance of admiration at the grand cathedral which adorned it; we had no time to enter in order to see the beauty of the sacred edifice from within its hallowed walls. We beheld from afar the magnificent proportions of a gigantic structure; we did not approach in order to inspect more closely the everlasting work of the immortal builder. Coming face to face with the monument erected by a great genius we were filled with admiration and astonishment; recovering from those first impressions we now wish to gratify the laudable curiosity which prompts us to examine more closely the edifice which for more than six hundred years has excited the admiration of all who love the grand, the good, the beautiful and the true. However strongly we may covet the honor of being reputed a good *ciccrone*, we find it necessary at the very beginning of this pilgrimage to the cathedral erected by St. Thomas, to make a declaration which is never made by the professional guide.

*The ciccrone's humble declaration:*—I cannot promise to point out and explain every object of interest in the edifice. To appreciate the beauties of the *Summa* one must spend not only an hour or a day, but weeks and months, yes, years, in contemplating the grandeur of the general plan and the perfection of the details of this remarkable production of the great architect of theology. We must, of necessity, content ourselves with the selection of a few specimens of singular strength and beauty which will serve to give us an insight into the mind of the architect. In other words—and here we lay aside the metaphor—it is our intention to give in this article some specimens of St. Thomas' doctrine and method, choosing from different parts of the *Summa* principles which will show that faith does not hamper reason, but that reason in a Christian philosopher, enlightened and guided by faith, may soar

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\*Reprinted from the *Catholic University Bulletin*, Vol. XVI, No. 8.

to the summit of intelligent research, good sense and sound judgment. The *Summa* represents the perfection of reason applied to the truths of faith in the manner in which it should be used, viz., as the servant of the higher truth which God deigned to reveal to men. For that very reason the Angelic Doctor is the greatest of Christian philosophers and the Prince of Theologians; he is the giant beside whom other philosophers and theologians appear as mere striplings, great and useful though they may be and are in their own sphere; thus it will be instructive as well as interesting to know something of his method in treating questions of philosophy and theology.

*Difficulty of choosing specimens.*—We are well aware that any one attempting to give what might be called illustrations from the *Summa* must contend with two serious difficulties. First, he meets with what the French so aptly term “l’embarras du choix”; where there are so many excellencies it is difficult to choose one or a few as the objects of our special study and admiration. In the second place, St. Thomas’ works were written in Latin, and in a style which was peculiarly his own; for lucidity, brevity and expressiveness nothing like it has ever been known. It is our firm conviction that all the great professors of Yale, Harvard, Oxford and Cambridge could never reproduce in English a page of St. Thomas which would do justice to the original. The mere mention of these two difficulties will be equivalent to a request that the reader kindly bear in mind, first, that the specimens given are only a few out of many that might have been chosen to illustrate St. Thomas’ doctrine; secondly, that expositions of his doctrine given in English fall far short of the beauty, strength, accuracy and completeness of the Latin in which St. Thomas expressed, with the greatest ease and apparently without effort, the sublimest doctrines of theology.

*Division of the Summa recalled.*—Let us begin this investigation by recalling the grand division of the *Summa Theologica* in its three parts. The first treats of God—of God in Himself, one nature in three persons; of God as the Author and Ruler of the universe. The second treats of the tendency of the rational creature to God; in other words, of God as the end of man, and of human acts in general (1a 2ae) and in particular (2a 2ae). The third treats of Christ, who as man is the way by which we tend to God; in other words, of God as Redeemer, of the sacraments, and of the eternal life to which Christ conducts men. This division is recalled because we intend, in choosing specimens of St. Thomas’ doctrine to follow the order of the *Summa*.

*Principles of Pedagogy*.—Yielding to an inclination which is entirely in accordance with the fitness of things, we shall select for the first specimen St. Thomas' principles on *teaching*—a most honorable and praiseworthy occupation in which many readers of the *Bulletin* are engaged during nine or ten months of the year. In his commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew, St. Thomas has sketched the character of an ideal Christian *Doctor*, of one who teaches the truths of religion. The perfect Doctor, he says, is one whose life as well as whose doctrine is light. Three things are necessary to him: *Stability*, that he may never deviate from the truth; *clearness*, that he may teach without obscurity; and *purity of intention*, that he may seek God's glory and not his own. (In cap. v. *Matt.*) In the Prologue to the *Summa* and in several articles of the body of the work he lays down principles concerning teachers in general. The few words which he wrote by way of introduction to the *Summa*, giving his reasons for composing a manual of theology, are a mine of information concerning his principles on pedagogy, or the art of teaching the young.

*Prologue to the Summa*.—"We have considered that beginners in this sacred science find many impediments in those things which have been written by various authors; partly, on account of the multiplication of useless questions, articles and arguments; partly, because those things which are necessary for the education of novices (*i. e.*, beginners) are not treated systematically, but as the exposition of certain books or the occasion of disputation demanded; and partly because the frequent repetitions beget confusion and disgust in the minds of learners."

*Hints to teachers. Avoid useless questions*.—Do not overload the mind of the beginner with a multitude of useless questions; choose those that are primary and fundamental; give the student a clear knowledge of them, bearing in mind the capacity of the pupil; establish them by a few good, strong arguments, if proofs are necessary, and then pass on to something more particular, without consuming valuable time in dealing with hair-splitting arguments which the beginner cannot understand, and in the study of which there is little profit and much annoyance. These remarks of St. Thomas were a quiet criticism of a scholasticism which was carried to excess, but they express a general rule which should be observed in all institutions of learning, from the highest university down to the lowest primary school. Neglect of this rule has often resulted in thrusting upon the community a class of so-called graduates, with a smattering of everything and a real knowledge



of nothing—graduates who made our fathers sigh, sometimes not without reason, for the old-time schoolhouses and the days of “the three Rs.”

*Order:*—In the next place, books for beginners should be written with due regard for scientific order, which is conducive to clearness of perception and helpful to the memory. The importance of this canon will be readily admitted by all who have ever attempted to “straighten out” the ideas of one who was not from the beginning of his education trained to think and study with order. Theology was a confused mass of dogmas, disputes and objections until St. Thomas introduced order into the chaos. As it was with theology so has it been, so shall it be, with other branches of knowledge, if due attention is not given to the scientific distribution of the subjects treated. By paying attention to this rule St. Thomas made it possible to take in at one glance the whole field of Catholic Theology.

*Avoid repetitions:*—Thirdly, avoid repetitions which, if they be frequent and unnecessary, excite disgust and cause confusion. For those who are very young it is necessary to repeat the same thing frequently in order that it may be indelibly impressed on their minds; but there is a limit to this necessity. Many a boy has left school in disgust because he was not allowed to advance, but was held back, waiting perhaps for dull or lazy classmates, and had to listen for weeks or months to the same old story. But, we must not enter into the details of school or college life; we merely wished to call attention to a principle which guided St. Thomas when he wrote the *Summa*. The three rules which have been mentioned he followed to the letter, writing “with brevity and clearness” on those things which pertain to sacred doctrine, and that is one of the reasons why his *Summa* is still regarded as the model manual of theology. The advanced student can find in it material for deep and mature thought, and beginners who have read its pages are unanimous in declaring that it is the most satisfactory and the clearest of all theologies.

*Teaching and learning:*—In the first article, 117th question of the first part, St. Thomas asks the question: Can one man teach another? After rejecting the theories of Averroes and Plato—opinions which were founded on their false systems with regard to the union of soul and body—the Angelic Doctor gives his own answer to the question. One man can teach another, and the teacher can be truly said to impart knowledge to the mind of the pupil by causing him actually to know that which before he had only the capacity to know. Of the effects produced by an external

agent, some are caused by an external agent alone, some are caused by an external agent and also by a cause operating from within. Thus a house contributes nothing to its own erection: the work is all done by an external agent, the builder. But health is caused in a sick person sometimes by the medicine which he takes and sometimes by the recuperative powers of nature itself. When two causes cooperate in the production of such effects it must be remembered that the principal cause is not the external agent, but the internal one; the external agent is the assistant, furnishing means and aid which the internal agent makes use of to produce the desired effect. The physician does not produce health; health is produced by nature aided by the physician and his remedies.

This is what takes place when one man teaches another. Knowledge in the pupil must result from the activity of his own mind. Sometimes, without the aid of a teacher, he can acquire knowledge by his own exertions, applying the native force of his mind by which he naturally knows the first principles of all knowledge. Sometimes he is taught by another, but even then the mind of the pupil is the principal cause, the teacher is only the assistant, stating universal propositions from which others follow, or giving examples and similitudes which readily bring to the mind things of which the pupil had not thought, or showing the connection between principles and conclusions which the pupil would not have noticed if the master had not called his attention to them.

This, according to St. Thomas, is how a master causes a pupil to know things. It is not like the process of pouring water into a vessel. He is not simply the receiver of good things from without; he is a living agent, and all the teachers in the world can do him no good unless they adopt methods which will stimulate the activity of his mind. No one can know for another, each one must know for himself; teachers are only intended to excite the latent energies of our minds and to help us in knowing. It is not well to make things too easy for learners; if the mind of the pupil is not called upon to digest and assimilate the food administered by the teacher, the knowledge communicated, often with great pains on the part of the teacher, will be—to use a common expression—like water poured into a sieve. If you wish to know a good teacher, and if you wish to know a well written book intended to stimulate healthy activity in the minds of students, read the *Summa* of St. Thomas.

*St. Thomas and the necessity of revelation.*—From the prologue let us pass to the first article of the *Summa*, where St. Thomas

treats of the necessity of revelation for the knowledge of natural truths. Because all men by the light of reason can know some things, Rationalists and infidels say that men can know all things without the aid of revelation. Catholic theologians were not slow to answer that men, as they have been and as they are, cannot without revelation have a perfect knowledge even of those truths which come within the scope of their natural capacity for knowing. In their zeal for the defence of God's teaching some theologians went so far as to assert that without the aid of revelation, which had been handed down by tradition in the human family, men cannot have a certain and perfect knowledge of any supersensible truth. This was an exaggeration, and Traditionalism has been condemned by the Vicar of Christ on earth. (Greg. XVI, Sept. 8, 1840. See Denzinger, *Enchir.*, n. 1622.)

St. Thomas pointed out the medium between Rationalism and Traditionalism. In the 88th question of the first part of the *Summa* he proves that man can know supersensible and immaterial things, and even God Himself. But that knowledge would not suffice for the human race in its present condition in order that all might have a perfect knowledge of natural truths, especially of truths that pertain to God. The reader's attention may here be called to the fact that the Fathers of the Vatican Council in defining the necessity of revelation, used almost the same words employed by St. Thomas in the first article of the *Summa Theologica*, and in the fourth chapter, first book, of the *Summa Contra Gentiles*. The Vatican Council says that the revelation of natural truths is necessary in order that they may be known "by all men, without delay, with certitude and without admixture of error." St. Thomas had written in the *Summa Theologica*: without revelation these truths could be known "only by a few, after a long time, and with the admixture of many errors." These words are a repetition of what he wrote in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, where he says that God in His goodness proposed those natural truths to be believed by men that thus "all might easily have the knowledge of God without doubt and without error." Now, how does he prove his thesis? Without revelation the truths of natural religion would have been known only by a few for three reasons: first, some men are unfit for study: hence they could never attain to the summit of knowledge which consists in knowing God. Again, some are too much occupied with temporal affairs; hence they would not have the time to acquire knowledge of the sublimest truths. Lastly, some men are lazy, and although God has implanted in them a natural

desire to know Him, they would never undergo the labor which is the price that must be paid for the knowledge of metaphysical truths.

Even those few would acquire this knowledge only after a long time, because (a) the truths of which we are speaking are profound truths, and (b) a long preparation is necessary before men can understand them, and (c) whilst men are young the passions prevent the attentive consideration of sublime truths. But even after long preparation and study those few would still be in doubt and be subject to error. We are all liable to err. Knowing this and knowing that the greatest philosophers dispute about important questions, and often mix in with the truth things that are false or doubtful or only half proved, where are we to find amongst men that freedom from error and doubt without which our knowledge even of natural truths will be very imperfect and unsatisfactory? Consequently, revelation is necessary in order that those truths may be known by all, without delay, with certainty and without error. Comments would destroy the beauty and the force of those words. I simply ask: Where can we find anything to equal the conciseness and the completeness of that article?

*Ontologism and Kantism*.—St. Thomas is scarcely less admirable in his refutation of Ontologism. This name has been given to a system which teaches that the first idea formed in the human mind is a direct knowledge of God. Without that idea we can have no scientific knowledge; with that idea we can have a certain and infallible knowledge of all things. We do not see the essence of God as He is in Himself, but we see that essence as it represents all things, which were first conceived in the mind of God and were then created in accordance with the idea of the Divine Architect of the world.

This system was taught by Malebranche in the seventeenth century, and afterwards, with various modifications unnecessary to explain, by Gioberti and others, notably in our own times by Professor Ubaghs, a great light of the University of Louvain.

It cannot be denied that if the propositions of the Ontologists could be admitted we should have a ready answer to the objections made by sceptics against the scientific value of metaphysical knowledge. We have knowledge, it could be answered, of truths that are universal, immutable, necessary and eternal, because we see them in the eternal and immutable Author of all things and all truth. Kant and his disciples could no longer claim that our metaphysical knowledge is destitute of a scientific basis. Although the senses do not manifest the eternal, necessary and immutable

truth of first principles, *e. g.*, of the principle of contradiction; a thing cannot be and not be at the same time, or the whole is greater than its part, nevertheless we see these truths in God when He is seen by our minds. Such a defence of metaphysics, however, is based upon an exaggeration of the truth, and Ontologism was condemned by a decree of the Inquisition dated Sept. 18th, 1861. Verily there is nothing new under the sun. St. Thomas had refuted Ontologism six hundred years before the date of the decree. In the 11th article, question 12 of the first part of the *Summa* he proves that no one can see the essence of God in this life; this vision is reserved for the blessed who always see Him face to face. In the 5th article, question 84 of the same part he shows that there is no necessity of saying that we see all things *in God* as in a mirror; because we have our intellects, which are rays emanating from the Divine Light, distinct from God and caused by Him. What the intellect manifests is truth, and we know it to be the truth because of the evidence and light which accompany the manifestation in our minds (*vide* 1 P., qq. 16 and 17). We know the truths: two and two make four; the whole is greater than its part; there is no effect without a cause, etc., because we *see* them. There is no more necessity of proving these truths than there is of proving the reality of the stone or brick falling on one's head. If you analyze and apply those principles, they will reveal the Source of all truth, as rays make known the sun from which they emanate, but they are not God, they are participations of the eternal Truth which enlightens all men. St. Thomas goes farther, and in the 2a 2ae, question 173, first article, he anticipates an answer which the Ontologists might make, and explodes the distinction on which it is based. In the time of St. Thomas some writers thought to explain the gift of prophecy by saying that prophets see God to whom the past, present and future are one. When they were asked, as we ask the Ontologists: In what then do they differ from the blessed in heaven? the answer was: They see God not as He is in Himself, but in as much as He contains representations of future events. Worthless distinction, says St. Thomas. You cannot see things as they are represented in the essence of God without seeing the essence of God. The representations or ideas of things (*rationes rerum*) in God are the essence of God as it represents things, past, present or future. If God were composed of parts we might see one part without seeing the other, but whoever is looking directly at a thing that is simple sees either all of it or nothing. The participations of the one great Truth are manifold; hence we can see one without seeing the other

or without seeing the source; but whoever sees these truths in the essence sees also the source, unless words have lost all meaning. Outside of these principles, which St. Thomas proposed as calmly as if he were writing the first page of an A B C book, there is no solid refutation of many of the high-sounding *isms* which make life burdensome to students of philosophy in our days.

*St. Thomas and interpretation of Scripture*.—Another manifestation of St. Thomas' good judgment is to be found in those passages where he lays down rules for the interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures. These rules are explained at some length in the Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on the study of the Scriptures, and a glance at the document will show that they are taken in great part from the writings of St. Thomas. In the course of the document the learned Pontiff frequently refers to his favorite theologian by the use of such expressions as, "St. Thomas being our guide"—"St. Thomas here holds the first place"—"St. Thomas teaches"—"This course was pursued by that great theologian Thômas Aquinas," etc. In thus quoting and following St. Thomas the Pope does not neglect other guides and other rules; they are, as it were, embodied in St. Thomas, because he may be regarded as the personification of the wisdom of preceding times, being in a special manner filled with reverence for the authority of the Church and for the writings of the Fathers, the two tribunals to which disputes on the Scriptures must be referred. It is not to be expected that we should make a complete list of the rules laid down by St. Thomas for the study of the Scriptures, but we take pleasure in calling attention to a few principles which he proposed for the guidance of interpreters in cases of difficulty and doubt. The importance of these principles is very strongly urged in the Pope's Encyclical, and although they are very plain and simple, it must be confessed that they have not always been observed by those who should have applied them. Attacks made at different times by so-called scientists against the first chapter of Genesis have called forth many able books in defence of the revealed truth, but the defenders did not always observe that moderation and calmness which would have ensured uniformity of method in the defence, and which would have precluded the necessity of changing with the variations of science. St. Thomas treated those very questions and found it necessary to discuss many theories offered in explanation of the words of Genesis. He was not in the least disturbed by any of them and would not have been disturbed if the systems proposed had been twenty times as numerous as they were, because he was always guided by a good rule found in St. Augus-

tine, based upon strong faith and good common sense. In such questions he wrote (1 P., q. 68, art. 1), two things are to be borne in mind: first, that the Scriptures teach nothing but the truth. Secondly, since passages of Scripture can sometimes be explained in different ways, let no one hold one explanation so tenaciously that he would not be prepared to give it up if a better explanation were offered. The first part of this rule—about the truth of the Scriptures—had it been known and observed, would have prevented many cases of scriptural heart disease which at times afflicted certain timorous believers who foolishly became excited by reason of the discovery of some scientist. Let scientific men continue their investigations and excavations. When they are prepared to tell us just what science teaches, not what so-called scientists say, then we shall be prepared to meet them and to revise, if necessary, not the Scriptures—because there can be no opposition between true science and the words of the Holy Ghost—but our interpretations of Scripture. Necessity for such revisions will not be very frequent, because it has happened and will happen again, that what was flashed over the wires as a new discovery of science was simply the hastily concocted theory of some unbeliever, who was over-anxious to prove that there was no God and no hell. There may be apparent contradictions between science and Genesis; but the Catholic Church is to last until the end of time, and she can wait until science has determined what is certain before deciding what interpretations of Genesis are to be abandoned.

The second part of St. Thomas' rule—about various interpretations—had it been known and observed, would have prevented two grave evils: first, the disappointment and vexation of those who see their pet theories overturned; secondly, the scoffing of unbelievers, when they see theologians offering first one explanation and then another in defending the faith. St. Thomas lays down as a general rule that the defence of faith should not be based upon the reasons or theories advanced by different schools of theology. To outsiders what the Church teaches and what a theologian of the Church teaches are one and the same thing; and if they overthrow the theologian they think they have overthrown the faith and the Church. We who are of the faith know that theologians may make mistakes, whilst the Holy Ghost cannot teach error; even St. Thomas might fall, but the Church built upon the rock shall stand forever. St. Thomas, true to his principles, allowed the greatest latitude in interpreting the first chapter of Genesis, and any other part of Scripture, when the sense of the words had not been determined by the authority of the Church. He favors the

system which says that the days of creation are to be taken in the ordinary sense of the words, but he proposes his theory simply as an opinion, and does not reject the system of St. Augustine, who said that by the morning was meant the knowledge of things which the Angels have in the Word, *i. e.*, in the beatific vision, and by the evening the knowledge of things which the Angels have outside of the Word, *i. e.*, through infused ideas. He also mentions various theories about the light, the firmament, the condition of plants, trees and animals, when they were created, etc., but he had too much foresight and theological balance to tie himself down to any one theory; and thus the truth of the Scriptures remained intact whilst men and their theories appeared for a while on the scene and then passed away.

The specimens of St. Thomas' doctrine thus far given were taken from the first part of the *Summa*. We must now pass on to inspect other parts of his great work.

In the first place it may be remarked in a general way that in the 1a 2ae and 2a 2ae of St. Thomas there is more genuine moral theology, as a scientific knowledge of men and of their acts, than can be found in the hundreds of manuals or compendiums which have been written since the sixteenth century, and which can claim little merit except in so far as they apply to ever changing times and circumstances the principles proposed by St. Thomas or by other great scholastics.

*Human acts, virtues and vices, original sin, law, grace*.—His explanation of human acts and of those things which affect human acts; his definition and classification of the virtues and vices; his most sensible and most satisfactory explanation of original sin; the depth and accuracy of his treatise on laws; the sublimity and acumen of his tract on grace, have made the *prima secundae* the source and fountain-head from which flow the principles that should guide all those who wish to point out the true doctrine on the tendency of the rational creature to God.

*Best form of government*.—In the 1a 2ae, question 105, article first, we find St. Thomas' opinion on the best form of government. If we consider merely the words he used it would be said that he pronounces in favor of a limited monarchy; but if we go below the words and consider the principles on which his conclusion is based, it will appear that the Angelic Doctor was not averse to a republic, and I believe that if he were living to-day he would be an ardent supporter of our form of government. "One of the principal things to be considered," he wrote, "with regard to the good establishment of princes (rulers) is that all *should have some part*



*in the government*; for in this way peace is preserved amongst the people, and all are pleased with such a disposition of things and maintain it. The next thing to be considered is the form of government, of which there are principally two kinds: a Kingdom, in which one rules, and an Aristocracy, in which a few exercise the authority. The best form is that in which one rules over all, and under him there are others having authority, but the government pertains to all, because those who exercise authority can be chosen from all and are chosen by all. . . . Hence the best government is a mixture of a Kingdom, of Aristocracy and of Democracy, *i. e., of the power of the people*, in as much as the rulers can be chosen from the people, and the election of the rulers belongs to the people." There is a vast amount of good republicanism and of sound democracy in these words. First, by the king or monarch St. Thomas means nothing more than some *one* who is to represent the governing authority—who is to be, as we would say, the executive authority. Secondly, the *aristocracy* means those who exercise a salutary restraint on the power of the head of the government; because if there were no restraint the power of the king, says St. Thomas (*ad 2um*), would easily degenerate into tyranny. Congressmen and Senators for instance, would supply the demand for an aristocracy. Lastly, St. Thomas says that neither a kingdom nor an aristocracy will form a stable government unless the element of democracy is introduced by permitting the choice of the rulers from the people and by the people, that thus all may have some part in the government. These words lead us to believe that if St. Thomas were living to-day he would be a republican or a democrat.

*Infallibility of the Pope*:—In the *secunda secundae*, question 1, article 10, on Faith, St. Thomas Teaches the infallibility of the Pope, "to whose authority it pertains to determine finally the things that are of faith, that they may be held by all with unwavering assent." Hence, he adds, it has been the custom of the Church to refer to the Pope all the grave and difficult questions which arise; and our Lord said to St. Peter whom He appointed supreme Pontiff: "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, and thou being once converted confirm thy brethren" (*Luke xxii, 32*). He then gives the following theological reason for his conclusion: "There should be one faith in the Church, according to the words of St. Paul (*1 Cor. i, 10*): 'That you all speak the same things, and that there be no schisms among you.' This will not be possible unless questions of faith that arise can be determined by the one who presides over the whole Church, so that his determination

should be held by the whole Church." Three hundred years before Protestantism was known, and six hundred years before the Vatican Council was celebrated, St. Thomas proclaimed and proved Papal Infallibility.

*Infidels not to be forced to believe:*—In the tenth question, seventh article of the same treatise, St. Thomas teaches that unbelievers cannot be compelled to accept the Christian faith; because to believe is an act of the will and the will cannot be forced. Those who have accepted the faith can be punished if they fail to keep the promises which they made; unbelievers can lawfully be prevented from persecuting Christians, from blaspheming Christianity, or from carrying on a wicked proselytism; hence Christian nations have at times waged war against infidels. But, even when unbelievers have been conquered and captured they must be left free to believe or not to believe.

These things do not surprise us, being so reasonable, so natural and so well known. There are, however, in the world to-day—some of them are in our own country—men, who need the consoling assurance that the greatest of medieval theologians would not approve of a papal invasion for the purpose of compelling outsiders to accept the Roman Catholic faith.

*Children of Jews and infidels:*—St. Thomas will not allow the children of Jews or other unbelievers to be baptised without the consent of their parents (2a 2ae, q. x, art. 12; 3 P., q. 68, art. 10). According to the natural law, a child, before he arrives at the use of reason, is under the care of his father (*i. e.*, of his parents); hence it would be against natural justice if a child, before it acquires the use of reason, were withdrawn from the care of its parents, or if anything were done with it against the wish of the parents.

*The Incarnation:*—In the third part of the *Summa*, St. Thomas treats of the Incarnation, of the sacraments instituted by Christ, and of eternal life. We read in the life of St. Thomas that on three different occasions Christ spoke to His servant saying: "Bene scripsisti de me, Thoma—Thou has written well of Me, Thomas." This approbation of our Lord should be understood as applying in a special manner to the third part of the *Summa*. It is impossible to find anything more scientific and more sublime than St. Thomas' treatise on the Incarnation. Starting out with the Scriptures in his hand, and with this one truth accepted on faith: Jesus was both God and man, he constructs a most remarkable treatise on the natures and person of Christ, on the acts and sufferings of God incarnate. The tract contains fifty-nine questions, with an

average of five or six articles to a question. The Old and New Testaments, the councils, the decrees of the Popes, the writings of the Fathers, are all called upon to glorify Jesus Christ, the corner stone on which our faith is built. The treatise is a most extraordinary combination of deep faith and piety, of theological learning and good sense. What we know from good authority St. Thomas affirms with certainty, and no theologian can equal him when there is question of determining the conclusions which can be drawn from the truths made known by faith. On questions that depend on the will of God alone, if that will has not been made known to us, he wisely abstains from useless speculations. In this he differs from writers of less renown who seem to be afraid of saying: There are some things which we do not know and cannot know until God speaks on the subject.

*Baptism.*—He applies the same rule in his treatise on the sacraments. In his treatise, for instance, on the necessity of Baptism he first calls attention to the law of salvation laid down by our Saviour Himself: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (*John* iii, 5). After that, when the question arises: What, then, is to become of children who die without having an opportunity to receive baptism? St. Thomas answers: As far as we know, men can do nothing for them; they are in the hands of God, who is all-powerful and just (3 P., q. 68, art. 11 ad 1m). Men may write for weeks and months; they may fill the pages of reviews and may publish books on this subject, but, since God has not deigned to make any special revelation concerning these children, they can give us no more satisfaction than that which is afforded by St. Thomas' short declaration: Those children are in the hands of God; He will deal with them in justice and mercy.

*The Eucharist.*—His treatise on the Eucharist is one that would not disappoint those who expect something grand from the author of the Office of the Blessed Sacrament. For St. Thomas the Eucharist, as a sacrament and as a sacrifice, was truly the centre of the Christian religion. Towards our Lord under the sacramental species he had a profound devotion and a tender piety; hence he threw his whole soul into his tract on this sacrament of love. The bread of the angels made the Angelic Doctor more angelic; the extraordinary perspicacity of his penetrating mind is nowhere more strikingly manifested than in the articles of this treatise where he develops the conclusions which flow from the dogmas of the Real Presence and of Transubstantiation, or where he answers the objections which had been made or could be made against this im-

portant doctrine of the Catholic Church. Christ, in His sacred person and in the Eucharist, was the central object of St. Thomas' life and the centre towards which all his theological treatises were directed.

For other specimens of St. Thomas' doctrine the reader is referred to that golden book, the Catechism of the Council of Trent, which was taken almost bodily from the *Summa Theologica*, and was composed by three men who had spent their lives studying the works of the Angelic Doctor. Cardinal Newman was in love with this book, and always spoke of it in terms of the highest praise.

*St. Thomas and the Encyclicals of Leo XIII.*—We would also recommend most earnestly to those who wish to know St. Thomas, the study of the dogmatic Encyclicals of the late Pope Leo XIII. Knowing the Pope to be an enthusiastic admirer of the Angelic Doctor our readers will not be surprised to learn that his dogmatic Encyclicals are to a great extent nothing more than developments of principles laid down by St. Thomas. This is in a special manner true of the Encyclicals on Scholastic Philosophy, The Christian Constitution of States, The Condition of Workingmen, the Study of the Scriptures, and Devotion to the Holy Ghost. The Holy Father believed firmly that the principles of the Angelic Doctor would bring light and order into the darkness and confusion of the nineteenth century as they did in the thirteenth century. We should feel very happy and fully repaid for the time spent on this paper if we could think that it might be the means of exciting a desire to know and to follow the words of advice addressed to the children of this troubled age, by the wise, learned and saintly Pope Leo XIII.

D. J. KENNEDY, O. P.

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The "Reading Lists" in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* will be found most helpful to those seeking further information about St. Thomas.















