

Reviews

ST THOMAS AQUINAS: *SUMMA THEOLOGIAE*: Latin text and English translation, Introductions, Notes, Appendices and Glossaries. Blackfriars Publications, in conjunction with Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, and McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York.

Vol. I (Ia. 1): *Christian Theology*. Thomas Gilby, O.P. 30s.

Vol. II (Ia. 2-11): *Existence and Nature of God*. Timothy McDermott, O.P.; 35s.

Vol. XIII (Ia. 90-102): *Man made to God's Image*; Edmund Hill, O.P.; 35s.

The highest praise is due to the editors, translators and publishers of this splendid sixty-volume edition of the *Summa Theologiae*, of which three volumes have now simultaneously appeared. It would indeed be difficult to think of a method of presenting the Angelic Doctor's definitive work as suitable as that which Fr Thomas Gilby and his team have devised to meet the needs of both the 'beginners' for whom the Saint wrote it and of the experts who continue so voluminously to comment on it and dispute about it. Each volume has been committed to one scholar who has (with, in one case, the collaboration of Fr Gilby) been responsible for the whole of its contents, while the plan and the general manner of execution is uniform throughout. In each case the best Latin text available is printed with an English translation *en face*, an introduction and a number of appendices are provided to deal with basic concepts and with points of special interest and difficulty, and there are an extremely adequate glossary and index. Footnotes are provided dealing with any textual variants of importance, references to works quoted and to other parts of the works of St Thomas, and points of vocabulary and interpretation amenable to brief treatment; these different kinds of footnote are distinguished by different types of index-symbol. The translation is free and sometimes quite colloquial. It might indeed be considered as too free for a strictly scholarly work if the Latin original were not simultaneously visible for comparison, but as it is this freedom of rendering is extremely stimulating, and not least when the reader finds himself disposed to question it. It rises at times to heights of ingenuity and real brilliance and is more readable—and also more like normal English—than any other translation of any of St Thomas's works that I have seen.

Volume I is devoted entirely to the first question of Part One of the *Summa*, an allocation that would obviously be disproportionate were it not that this question, dealing as it does with the nature of Christian theology, is really a prolegomenon to the whole work. Nearly three-quarters of the volume consists of fourteen appendices, dealing with the structure, style, method and temper of the *Summa* and with such basic matters as Revelation, the Natural and the Supernatural, Doctrinal Development, the Senses of Scripture and Biblical Inspiration. These matters, which are all of great contemporary theological relevance, are

handled in a thoroughly modern and independent fashion and Fr Gilby's discussions of them are well worth reading for their own sake, quite apart from their relation to St Thomas. Thus, for example, the view that Scripture and Tradition are two independent sources of doctrine is quietly and firmly set aside, and the limitations imposed upon the biblical books by the circumstances and characters of their human authors are accepted as part of the divine plan of inspiration.

The second volume, covering questions two to eleven of Part One, contains the most widely discussed passages in any of St Thomas's works, namely those concerned with the existence of God, the possibility and method of proving it, and its immediate consequences. Where interpretations of St Thomas's aim and outlook vary so greatly and where feelings about them tend to be so vehement, the editor of these questions is certainly not to be envied. Nevertheless, Fr McDermott has performed his task with remarkable balance and impartiality; Fr Gilby has shared his responsibility by contributing twelve of the sixteen appendices, dealing successively with the Five Ways and the chief divine attributes. The editors are rather less 'agnostic' about our knowledge of God than was the late Fr Victor White, and I personally agree with them. Fr McDermott has a very penetrating footnote on p. 6 about an apparent contradiction in St Thomas bearing on this very point. I am not quite happy about the translation, in qu. 2, art. 1, of *per se notum* by 'self-evident', for, at least to me, 'self-evident' suggests 'evident without argument', whereas in the article, which includes the Anselmian ontological argument, *per se notum* means 'self-demonstrable' rather than 'self-evident' in this sense. In a crucial sentence in the *tertia via* Fr McDermott wisely defies both the Pian and the Leonine editions and omits the word *semper*. As I pointed out in my book *He Who Is* on p. 47, this omission which is supported by the best uncials, makes sense of the argument while the Pian-Leonine reading does not; those who have adopted the latter have invariably had to garble it in translation in order to make it appear coherent. It is, however, strange that, when he gives the rejected reading in a footnote, Fr McDermott appears to mistranslate it; surely *Impossibile est autem omnia quae sunt talia semper esse* must mean 'Not everything which is of this kind can exist for ever' and not 'Nothing which is of this kind can exist for ever.' Again, in the *quinta via*, *Aliqua quae cognitione carent, scilicet corpora naturalia, operantur propter finem* should surely be rendered 'Some things that lack awareness, namely bodies obeying natural laws, etc.' Fr McDermott's rendering 'All bodies obeying natural laws, even when they lack awareness, etc.' seems to state a different argument. Such questionable passages are, however, very infrequent and some of the translations are brilliant. Thus, in qu. 3, art. 4, *cui non fit additio* is translated 'unspecified', and in qu. 3, art. 5, *simpliciter* and *per reductionem* become 'immediately' and 'mediately' respectively. There is an extremely useful note on p. 30 about the three terms *esse*, *essentia* and *ens* and their various renderings; it is such terminological explanations as these, scattered throughout the book, that will help the student to avoid much unnecessary perplexity and confusion.

The third of these volumes to be published is in fact Volume Thirteen of the whole work; it contains questions 90 to 102 of Part One, dealing with the origin

of man, his creation in the image of God, and his paradisaic state. Fr Edmund Hill might indeed seem to have had assigned to him an ungrateful task, for, as he points out in his introduction, in this treatise St Thomas was hampered by what certainly looks like an outdated attitude to Scripture and what is certainly an obsolete medieval astronomy, physics, biology and geography. However, Fr Hill makes of this obstacle an opportunity for disentangling the essential theological issues from the contingent apparatus of contemporary science in which the Angelic Doctor expressed them and by which he illustrated them; there is a faint suggestion that even polygenism might escape the condemnation of *Humani Generis* if it could be shown not to compromise the doctrine of original sin (I take it that this is the force of the phrase 'as far as we can see' on p. xxiv.) Both in the Introduction and in Appendix III there are very penetrating and relevant discussions of the various senses of Scripture, especially in connection with the creation-narratives of Genesis. The terminology of 'literal' and 'spiritual' meanings of Scripture is denounced as misleading: 'When St Thomas talks about the literal sense, he does not mean "literal" literally' (p. xxix). And Fr Hill frankly expresses his preference for St Augustine's theory of creation as having more *actualité* than St Thomas's (p. 208). Some of his renderings are noteworthy. 'Concomitant', rather than 'accident', for *accidens* is particularly happy, (p. 9). 'Causative proportions' for *causales rationes* (p. 13) is perhaps more questionable, in spite of Fr Hill's suggestion that the idea in St Augustine's mind was basically Pythagorean. *Ratio*, like its Greek companion *logos*, has so many meanings besides 'proportion'; 'In the beginning was the Proportion' would hardly do for John 1, 1! On the other hand 'the female is a man *manque*' is a very neat rendering of *Femina est mas occasionatus* (p. 35); so is 'are geared to' of *ordinantur* (p. 141 et al.) and 'in next to no time' of *post modicum* (p. 157). There are very helpful notes in many places where obvious English equivalents of Latin words might be misleading, as for example, 'suffering' for *Passio* (p. 141). And there is a quite startling reference to demythologising and monkey-glands on p. 149. It may be added that St Thomas's discussion of man as made in God's image throws a good deal of light on St Augustine's use of the psychological analogy in his doctrine of the Trinity and makes it appear better founded than is sometimes alleged; for if St Augustine and St Thomas use man's mind as providing a helpful image for their thought about God, it is only because they are convinced that God has made man in his own image first.

Altogether the impression that these volumes give is one of almost exuberant vigour and freshness; as I have suggested, this seems to be largely due to the sense that the Latin text is there to protect the reader if the translator at times becomes air-borne. Unexpected and sometimes provocative renderings, original but defensible interpretations, illuminating contemporary allusions and applications occur with remarkable frequency. We can only hope that the fifty-seven volumes still to appear will come up to the level of the first three.

E. L. MASCALL