

My Way of Life

Pocket Edition of
St. Thomas

The Summa Simplified
for Everyone

BY
WALTER FARRELL, O. P., S. T. M.
AND
MARTIN J. HEALY, S. T. D.

1952

Msgr. Austin P. Bennett, JCD, P.A.
Director of the

CONFRATERNITY OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

5300 FORT HAMILTON PARKWAY, BROOKLYN, N.Y. 11219
0303

Foreword

NIHIL OBSTAT:

THOMAS W. SMIDDY, S. T. L.
Censor Librorum.

IMPRIMATUR:

✠ THOMAS EDMUNDUS MOLLOY, S. T. D.
Archiepiscopus-Episcopus.
Brooklynensis.

Brooklyn, XXIII Augusti 1952.

Copyright 1952 by Confraternity of the Precious Blood
Printed and Bound in the U. S. A.

All Rights Reserved Under International Copyright Convention
All Rights Reserved Under Pan-American Copyright Convention

HERE IS PRESENTED the masterpiece of St. Thomas — the Summa Theologica — in simplified form. This vast summary of Thomistic teaching which deals with every worthwhile truth from a to z, from the attributes of God to the zeal of man has been distilled into this little volume. It is, in truth, a miniature and simple Summa for everyman.

As its name signifies, the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas is the sum total of all theological knowledge, a vast synthesis in which is unfolded all that can be known of God and man. It is divided into three parts which deal with God, man and the God-man, respectively. It comprises 38 tracts, 631 questions, about 3,000 articles, 10,000 objections and their answers.

Obviously all of this vast material is not contained in this small volume. However, an earnest effort has been made by the authors to translate and re-present St. Thomas in concise form for the use of everyman.

THE CONFRATERNITY OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD in presenting this volume, aims to do for the Summa of St. Thomas what it has already done for the Missal—to place it into the hands of all men. The millions who have found Father Stedman's "My Sunday Missal" so helpful and practical for the Mass of the Altar will find "My Way of Life" equally helpful and practical for the "Mass of Life".

St. Thomas begins the Prologue to his great work with these words: "Because a teacher of Catholic truth ought not only to teach the learned but also to instruct the beginners, in accordance with the words of the Apostle: *As unto little ones in Christ, I gave you*

milk to drink, not meat (1 Cor. 3/1,2) we purpose in this book to treat of whatever belongs to the Christian religion in such a way as may tend to the instruction of beginners."

THE VOLUME, HERE PRESENTED, is in full accord with the purpose of St. Thomas. It brings his message from the halls of learning out into the market place and into the home. While primarily meant for everyman, it is profound enough for the most erudite. Hence it can be readily recommended to father and mother, sister and brother, to the high-school and college student, to the convert, the study and Newman Club, to the Confraternity class, to the religious and the priest, in a word, it can be recommended to everyone.

Part I is the work of the noted Thomist, Walter Farrell, O.P., who died shortly after its completion.

Parts II and III were written by Martin J. Healy, Professor of Dogmatic Theology, at the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception, Huntington, N. Y.

(Rt. Rev. Msgr.) Joseph B. Frey

Feast of the Assumption
1952

God and His Creatures

BY
WALTER FARRELL, O. P.
Master of Sacred Theology

Part I

CHAPTER I

*The One God**The Fact of God**Divine Simplicity**The Goodness of God**The Presence of God**The Oneness of God*

CHAPTER I

The One God

THE ROAD THAT STRETCHES before the feet of a man is a challenge to his heart long before it tests the strength of his legs. Our destiny is to run to the edge of the world and beyond, off into the darkness: sure for all our blindness, secure for all our helplessness, strong for all our weakness, gaily in love for all the pressure on our hearts.

IN THAT DARKNESS beyond the world, we can begin to know the world and ourselves, though we see through the eyes of Another. We begin to understand that a man was not made to pace out his life behind the prison walls of nature, but to walk into the arms of God on a road that nature could never build.

LIFE MUST BE LIVED, even by those who cannot find the courage to face it. In the living of it, every mind must meet the rebuff of mystery. To some men, this will be an exultant challenge: that so much can be known and truth not be exhausted, that so much is still to be sought, that truth is an ocean not to be contained in the pool of a human mind. To others, this is a humiliation not to be borne; for it marks out sharply the limits of our proud minds. In the living of life, every mind must face the unyielding rock of reality, of a truth that does not bend to our whim or fantasy, of the rule that measures the life and mind of a man.

IN THE LIVING OF LIFE, every human heart must see problems awful with finality. There are the obvious problems of death, marriage, the priesthood, religious vows; all unutterably final. But there are, too, the day

to day, or rather the moment to moment choices of heaven or hell. Before every human heart that has ever beat out its allotted measures, the dare of goals as high as God Himself was tossed down: to be accepted, or to be fled from in terror.

GOD HAS SAID SO LITTLE, that yet means so much for our living. To have said more would mean less of reverence by God for the splendor of His image in us. Our knowing and loving, He insists, must be our own; the truth ours because we have accepted it; the love ours because we have given it. We are made in His image. Our Maker will be the last to smudge that image in the name of security, or by way of easing the hazards of the nobility of man.

THE GREAT TRUTHS that must flood the mind of man with light are the limitless perfection of God and the perfectibility of man. The enticements that must captivate the heart of man are the divine goodness of God and man's gratuitously given capacity to share that divine life, to begin to possess that divine goodness even as he walks among the things of earth. The truths are not less certain because they are too clear for our eyes. The task before our heart is not to hold a fickle lover but to spend itself.

WITHOUT THESE TRUTHS, and the others that fill out the pattern of a man's days, we are underfed weaklings, starving waifs, paralyzed in our living not only by lack of strength but even more by lack of light. To live a man must move by the steps of his heart; and how can he move until he can see and be drawn by the beauty of Goodness and Truth?

NO MAN CAN GET SUCH WISDOM of himself in time to begin living his life or, indeed, in time

to end it. Wisdom must be given to him, for it belongs to God. He can have this wisdom that must be had; but not through the stumbling steps of his own reasoning. He can have it if he will take it from his Maker. He can see in the darkness if he will look through the eyes of God. He can begin life with wisdom lent by God, and have his heart flooded with gratitude for the loan; or he can prefer the false light of the illusion that tells him he is self-sufficient, and die before he begins to live.

A MAN HARDLY DARE face mere natural life alone; alone, he cannot even dream of sharing the divine. Yet, to escape disaster, he must not only so dream, he must make the dream come true.

IF MAN BEGINS LIFE with wisdom lent by God, he ends by possessing that wisdom; if he guides his steps by a light that is not his own along a road too high and hard for his feet, he ends united to that eternal Light, and at home forever in a world that is God's.

THERE ARE MEN AND WOMEN who do not know God. They are made for happiness; every perfectly designed item of their sublime nature strains for that fulfillment which is happiness. Ignorance commits them to frustration; they have eager hearts, pushed to the breaking point by all of nature's demands for happiness, but these hearts have only the wrong places to go. In a very real sense, there is a kind of knowledge of God buried deep in every man, as deep as his demand for happiness. Frustration here is basic, soul-searing, catastrophic. Man makes his way to the illusory havens offered by false gods, but always through a sea of tears shed by his own individual nature.

THIS TRAGIC THING can happen to men of all ages. It has happened. Yet it is not that God is so far from us, since in Him we live, move and have our being. Nor is it that the living God is so deeply hidden from the minds of men. The world is a mirror flashing back different facets of divine beauty, and all that is, by that very existence, shouts aloud God's name: He Who is. Of course there is no adequate picture of God to catch the eyes of men and hold them spell-bound. It would be less impossible to expect to hold the world in the embrace of our arms than to encompass the divine perfection in the thimble-capacity allotted to any creature.

YET THE LITTLE that we can see of the infinite perfection of God is an entrancing picture; to escape it, one must glue his eyes to something close, tangible, and blinding. The infatuated see little of anything, and even less of God.

ORDINARILY IT TAKES TIME, effort, and a kind of violence to become so fatuous. To simple men, as to the very wise, the pressing crush of movement that pushes things in the ordered direction that we know as natural, a faithful, daily execution of cosmic chores, has always been as awesomely revealing as the surge of the sea, and as paradoxically mysterious; for both are so inherently blind and incapable of originating such motion.

ONLY AN ADULT who has lost the clear vision of childhood begins to think of his acts, and of himself, as self-sufficient, entirely his own, springing from nowhere, in contradiction to history's short record of the ages of activity. To most men, that a man can lift his hand to thwart an enemy's blow or

to encourage a friend has been a wonder that enticed the mind along a path of thinking that brought him to the God on whom all activity depends, Himself so divinely independent.

THE MYSTERY OF LIFE'S END, and the even greater mystery of life's beginning, the ebb and flow of things beginning and things ending, the steady succession of the sadness of Fall and the glad promise of Spring, prevent the unfettered and uncluttered mind from missing what these were meant to make clear: a life without beginning to explain all beginnings, a life without end to explain death; an infinite Creditor of life to explain all the reckless loan of life to the living.

THE WORLD, AND THE MEN IN IT, are full of glad surprises; yet the surprises do not come from the things that are part and parcel of either men or things. If we know a man's humanity, we know all of it and there is no room for surprise. But a glimpse of the truth that is in him, a momentary contact with his goodness, a recognition of his nobility—all of these are at once a joy, a surprise, and a rich promise. In each case, what is seen or embraced is so obviously not the whole story. These perfections are as enticing as far horizons, or the limitless stretches of the sea's dark waters. They promise the heart and the mind long journeys and rich rewards, treasures beyond the capacities of any counting room. For these things have no fence about them; traces of them shining forth from the limited things of the world are the allures of the infinite, minute flakes of the precious perfection that belongs in its fullness only to God.

THE STAMP OF INTELLIGENCE is printed deep in the very being of the universe of unintelligent

things; for the theme of that cosmic poem is a theme of law and order shining forth from creatures totally incapable of themselves of disposing things to any end, let alone to cosmic ends. Whether we look at the harmony of the universe and see order written in the capital letters of unvarying procedure and effective subordination, or at the minute organization of microscopic details in the leaf of a tree, the ear of an animal, or the eye of a man, there is that same clear evidence of a gigantic, an infinite intelligence. We have been given a share in that intelligence that we might read the poem that only infinite intelligence could have written; though, of course, the full beauty and meaning of it is reserved to the mind that wrote it.

THE BOOK OF JOB describes God. "He is higher than Heaven, and what wilt thou do? He is deeper than Hell, and how wilt thou know? The measure of Him is longer than the earth and broader than the sea." (11/8-9) There is profound truth in this if we understand the depth of God as His searching knowledge of hidden things; His height as the supreme power of His omnipotence; His length as the endlessness of eternity; and His breadth as provident love embracing all things. For, of course, God is not to be reached by plunging into depths, or scaling heights, or by rushing to the edges of the world. He is not a physical bulk to be approached by steps of the body; He is everywhere, and is to be approached by steps of the soul. It is in this same way that we abandon Him and take up our abode far from Him, though He is in us and about us. It is our heart, not our feet, that rushes to His embrace or flees from His judgments.

WE SPEAK OF GOD'S LIFE, His divinity, His power because our language breaks down be-

fore the splendor of the infinite. We do our learning from the things that have been put together by divine genius and power; and so we speak and think of God in those same terms of parts joined to make a whole. For the brilliant beauty of rich simplicity staggers our minds: God is life, unlimited, eternal; He is goodness, without qualification or limit; He is power, boundless and omnipotent. These are not divine possessions; rather, God is each and all of these limitless perfections. What has life and is not life is creature caused by life infinite.

THE IMAGES OF GOD are necessarily imperfect, among others, our very selves; for images are by no means reproductions of the original, infinite model of all creation. They mirror God as far as He can be mirrored; and the divine simplicity can be represented in the created world only by increasing complexity through added perfection. For we, like all other creatures, have something of life, something of goodness, something of truth; and we reach out day by day for still more.

THERE IS no measuring rod of God. Nor is God the measure of creatures in the sense in which we might call a perfect plant the measure of the imperfect plants of the same kind. It is only in this sense that God is the measure of things and of men: the closer any thing or any man comes to God, the more there is to that thing or man in its own line of perfection. A man is more a man for drawing closer to God; a man is more godlike as he perfects his humanity.

ST. HILARY STATES the simplicity of God in words simple enough to be worthy of that divine simplicity: "God Who is strength, is not made up of