

**THE "SUMMA
THEOLOGICA" OF ST.
THOMAS AQUINAS. PART
I. QQ. CII.- CXIX. (5)**

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AQUINAS THOMAS

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PART I.
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TREATISE ON THE DIVINE
GOVERNMENT

THE "SUMMA THEOLOGICA"

FIRST PART.

TREATISE ON THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT.

QUESTION CIII.

OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THINGS IN GENERAL.

(In Eight Articles.)

HAVING considered the creation of things and their distinction, we now consider in the third place the government thereof, and (1) the government of things in general; (2) in particular, the effects of this government. Under the first head there are eight points of inquiry: (1) Whether the world is governed by someone? (2) What is the end of this government? (3) Whether the world is governed by one? (4) Of the effects of this government? (5) Whether all things are subject to Divine government? (6) Whether all things are immediately governed by God? (7) Whether the Divine government is frustrated in anything? (8) Whether anything is contrary to the Divine Providence?

FIRST ARTICLE.

WHETHER THE WORLD IS GOVERNED BY ANYONE?

We proceed thus to the First Article:—

Objection 1. It would seem that the world is not governed by anyone. For it belongs to those things to be governed,

which move or work for an end. But natural things which make up the greater part of the world do not move, or work for an end; for they have no knowledge of their end. Therefore the world is not governed.

Obj. 2. Further, those things are governed which are moved towards some object. But the world does not appear to be so directed, but has stability in itself. Therefore it is not governed.

Obj. 3. Further, what is necessarily determined by its own nature to one particular thing, does not require any external principle of government. But the principal parts of the world are by a certain necessity determined to something particular in their actions and movements. Therefore the world does not require to be governed.

On the contrary, It is written (Wisd. xiv. 3): *But Thou, O Father, governest all things by Thy Providence.* And Boëthius says (*De Consol.* iii.): *Thou Who governest this universe by mandate eternal.*

I answer that, Certain ancient philosophers denied the government of the world, saying that all things happened by chance. But such an opinion can be refuted as impossible in two ways. First, by observation of things themselves: for we observe that in nature things happen always or nearly always for the best; which would not be the case unless some sort of providence directed nature towards good as an end; which is to govern. Wherefore the unfailling order we observe in things is a sign of their being governed; for instance, if we enter a well-ordered house we gather therefrom the intention of him that put it in order, as Tullius says (*De Nat. Deorum* ii.), quoting Aristotle.* Secondly, this is clear from a consideration of Divine goodness, which, as we have said above (Q. XLIV., A. 4; Q. LXV., A. 2), was the cause of the production of things in existence. For as *it belongs to the best to produce the best*, it is not fitting that the supreme goodness of God should produce things without giving them their perfection. Now a thing's ultimate perfection consists in the attainment

* Cleanthes.