

Sancti Thomæ de Aquino  
*Quodlibet* IV, quæstio 9, articulus 3

UTRUM MAGISTER determinando quæstiones theologicas magis debeat uti ratione, vel auctoritate

Circa tertium sic proceditur: videtur quod magister determinans quæstiones theologicas magis debeat uti auctoritatibus quam rationibus.

Quia in qualibet scientia quæstiones optime determinantur per prima principia illius scientiæ. Sed prima principia scientiæ theologicæ sunt articuli fidei, qui nobis per auctoritates innotescunt. Ergo maxime quæstiones theologicæ sunt determinandæ per auctoritates.

Sed contra, est quod dicitur ad Tit., I, 9: *ut sit potens exhortari in doctrina sana, et contradicentes revincere*. Sed contradicentes melius revincuntur rationibus quam auctoritatibus. Ergo magis oportet determinare quæstiones per rationes quam per auctoritates.

Respondeo. Dicendum, quod quilibet actus exequendus est secundum quod convenit ad suum finem. Disputatio autem ad duplicem finem potest ordinari. Quædam enim disputatio ordinatur ad removendum dubitationem an ita sit; et in tali disputatione theologica maxime utendum est auctoritatibus, quas recipiunt illi cum quibus disputatur; puta, si cum Iudæis disputatur, oportet inducere auctoritates veteris testamenti: si cum Manichæis, qui vetus testamentum respuunt, oportet uti solum auctoritatibus novi testamenti: si autem cum schismaticis, qui recipiunt vetus et novum testamentum, non autem doctrinam sanctorum nostrorum, sicut sunt Græci, oportet cum eis disputare ex auctoritatibus novi vel veteris testamenti, et illorum doctorum quod ipsi recipiunt. Si autem nullam auctoritatem recipiunt, oportet ad eos convincendos, ad rationes naturales confugere. Quædam vero disputatio est magistralis in scholis non ad removendum errorem, sed ad instruendum auditores ut inducantur ad intellectum veritatis quam intendit: et tunc oportet rationibus inniti investigantibus veritatis radicem, et facientibus scire quomodo sit verum quod dicitur: alioquin si nudis auctoritatibus magister quæstionem determinet, certificabitur quidem auditor quod ita est, sed nihil scientiæ vel intellectus acquirat et vacuus abscedet.

Et per hæc patet responsio ad obiecta.

WHETHER A TEACHER determining the answer to theological questions should use reason rather than authority

It seems that a teacher determining theological questions should use authorities rather than reasons.

For, in any science, questions are best determined through the first principles of that science. But the first principles of theological science are the articles of faith, which become known to us through authorities. Therefore, theological questions most of all should be determined by means of authorities.

On the other hand, Titus 1.9 says, *that he may be able to exhort in sound doctrine and to confute those who contradict it*. But gainsayers are better confuted by reasons than by authorities. Therefore, it is necessary to determine questions by reasons rather than by authorities.

I answer that any act should be carried out as befits its end. But disputation can be ordered toward a twofold end. 1) Some disputations are directed toward removing doubt whether something is so; and in a theological disputation of that sort one should use especially the authorities one's fellow disputants accept. If one disputes with Jews, one must bring in authorities from the Old Testament; if with Manicheans (who reject the Old Testament), one must use only authorities from the New Testament; if with schismatics who accept the Old and New Testaments but not the teaching of our Fathers—this is the case with the Greeks—, then one must dispute using authorities from the Old and the New Testament and from those Doctors they accept. But if disputants accept no authority, one must have recourse to natural reasons for the purpose of refuting them. 2) Other disputations are pedagogical disputations in schools, meant not for removing error but for instructing their hearers so that they might be led to understand the truth; then, those investigating the root of truth and making known how what's said is true must rely on reasons; otherwise, if a teacher determines a question with bare authorities, the hearer will indeed be assured that something is so, but he will acquire no science or understanding and will go away with an empty head.

And from these remarks the answer to the objection is clear.