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SOME ANSWERS TO THE OBJECTIONS OF ONE OPPOSED TO A SCHOOL OF  
SACRED THEOLOGY FOR RELIGIOUS WOMEN

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AS TO THE NATURE OF THE SCHOOL

Objection 1. It would seem that a School of Sacred Theology for Religious Women is not necessary. Now Sacred Theology is necessary, in seminaries for the training of priests who are to have immediate charge of souls. But this is not the work of Religious women. Therefore there is no need of such a School.

Objection 2. It would seem that a School of Sacred Theology could be of help to Sisters teaching Religion but not for others. So such a school is not very practical for most teachers.

Objection 3. It would seem that a progressive school should place the emphasis on science. But a school of Theology does not do this.

REPLY: Objection 1. If theology is necessary for the training of priests, because they are to have immediate charge of souls, then it is necessary for the training of sisters for the same reason. They too, have charge of souls. If they are not concerned with the souls as to "foro interno" they certainly are as to "foro externo", and this relation of guidance to the children they teach is as important as that of the priest. The elements of time and place put the children in the classroom for several hours every day, for five days a week, and that for some thirty-five weeks a year during a period of time ranging from eight to twelve years. The implication is staggering when one stops to think of the tremendous responsibility that devolves upon the sisters in the moral formation and direction they give the students. Then, one must of necessity conclude that they must have the best of theological training in order to fulfill correctly their mandate of educating the youth. Now, in what other type of school than in a School of Sacred Theology, as held at Providence College, can sisters receive a training that will help them meet this serious obligation...

Reply to Objection 2. That a School of Sacred Theology is of the greatest help to the sisters who teach Religion to students is a truism that no one dare question. But that such a school is not practical for teachers of other subjects is a fallacy.

The teacher is not merely an instructor but she is primarily an educator. Now, to be an educator is to strive to educate, or draw out, all the potentialities of the whole child. But to do this requires vastly more than technical knowledge of a subject; it requires all the possible knowledge about the faculties of the soul and the powers of the body. In what other work than in the Summa Theologica of Saint Thomas, taught in its entirety in the School of Sacred Theology, can one find such a thesaurus of knowledge...

Reply to Objection 3. If the term progressive school is used in the sense in which the protagonists of secularism employ it, we are not in line with the statement. Again, if the emphasis on science implies the exclusion of everything but the experimental, we object to the statement. But if progressive is used in its true sense of moving forward, and emphasis in science means emphasis on systematized knowledge then we are fully in agreement with the statement. But we object to the argument that a School of Sacred Theology is not progressive and that it does not place emphasis on science, for this type of school stresses the movement forward towards truth and emphasizes Theology the science of sciences, so masterfully systematized by Saint Thomas.

#### AS TO THE PURPOSE OF THE SCHOOL

OBJECTION 1. It would seem that such a school as the School of Sacred Theology does not provide for an adequate education of women, if one compares the subjects offered in this school with those offered in other schools.

OBJECTION 2. It would seem that the time spent in this type of school, at studies not carrying credits towards a degree, is lost time.

Reply to Objection 1. If one compares the subjects offered in this school with those offered in other schools to Religious women, then we can say that these schools though they offer the traditional curricula in Letters and Sciences, lack certain fundamental subjects required for the adequate education of Religious teachers, to wit: Theology, Canon Law, Sacred Scripture, and Church History.

Reply to Objection 2. If one's end in seeking an education is in terms of credits and degrees, then there is full agreement with the statement that time spent in a School of Theology is time lost.

But if, on the other hand, the end sought in education is one's perfection and the ultimate final end, the Glory of God, then there is a vehement opposition to the argument.

## AS TO THE VALUE OF THE SCHOOL

OBJECTION 1. It would seem that a School of Sacred Theology would tend to develop Religious women into proud and stubborn intellectuals.

OBJECTION 2. It would seem that such a school could become dangerous to some particular type of Religious women who tend to be scrupulous.

OBJECTION 3. A School of Sacred Theology must be a very dreary place to study in, if one judges by the list of uninteresting courses offered.

REPLY TO OBJECTION 1. The School of Theology does tend to develop the intellect of Religious women, but according to the best of intellectualism, that of Aristotle and Saint Thomas. With this part of the argument there is agreement. But there is objection to the part of the argument that states that such a school tends to make them proud and stubborn. No one can sanely hold this opinion if he or she has read the Thomistic theses on the virtues, which theses are studied at the School of Theology. Had the inmates of Port Royal been influenced by the Summa of St. Thomas instead of by the Augustinus of Jansenius, History would have a different fact to record.

REPLY TO OBJECTION 2. As regards this argument, it would seem that to those Religious women tending to be scrupulous, the opportunity to deepen and broaden their theological knowledge has become a remedial and not a dangerous process.

REPLY TO OBJECTION 3. In reply to this objection we can state the principle that a cause can be known by its effects. One can come to visit the School of Sacred Theology, at Providence College, and certainly the so very peaceful atmosphere radiating the happiness of its inmates will give ample proof of the fascinating appeal of the subjects, of the remarkable erudition of the Faculty, and of the great interest and enthusiasm of the students.

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