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THEOLOGY

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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LIFE AND WORKS OF THOMAS AQUINAS

The first portion of the following introductory material was taken from, *Thomas Aquinas; An Evangelical Appraisal*, by Norman Geisler. [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Company, 1991, p. 1-43.] We thank the Baker Books for graciously allowing us to reprint these helpful chapters. The author's summary and appraisal was written from an Evangelical perspective.

The second portion of introductory comments consists of an article written from a Catholic perspective and taken from the 1913 edition of the Catholic Encyclopedia, published by the Encyclopedia Press, Inc.

from, Thomas Aquinas; An Evangelical Appraisal, *by* Norman Geisler

CHARACTER SKETCH

THOMAS AQUINAS

It would be naive to think that, just because Thomas Aquinas wrote before the Reformation, Protestants will regard him as much theirs as do Catholics. After all, Aquinas was one of the most influential practitioners of that scholasticism from which Luther wished to separate. No one who reads the *Summa theologiae* can be unaware of Aquinas's espousal of precisely those "additions" to which Protestants react so sternly. Needless to say, this point is an important one and it could be developed, but the intended readers of this book already know anything I might say about it. I want, in this prefatory note, to underscore another point, one that I think animates Dr. Geisler's work.

Aquinas flourished in the third quarter of the thirteenth century. At the end of the century, one of the great imaginative works of Christendom was begun, a magnificent poem of our journey to God set precisely in Holy Week of 1300. I mean, of course, *The Divine Comedy*. Dante called Aristotle "the master of those who know," but he himself can be called the poet of those who believe. If skeptics and atheists have found the hundred cantos through which Dante takes us through hell and purgatory to heaven irresistible, the person for whom these represent the eschatological stakes of life will read Dante for edification as well as for esthetic pleasure. I take it to be the conviction of my good friend Dr. Norman Geisler that Aquinas can function in a way analogous to Dante for all Christians.

Reading Geisler's landmark volume, in which he straightforwardly confronts notable evangelical rejections of, or at least cautions about, Aquinas, and seeing the life and writings of the man who has been my philosophical mentor for some forty years freshly presented in a new and surprising light, made me think once again what poor stewards of Aquinas's thought we Thomists have been. If, as Geisler argues, Aquinas

has come under evangelical fire for holding things he did not hold, I sometimes think that Thomists have commended him for positions that are not his. For this reason I was particularly interested in Geisler's treatment of the relation between faith and reason.

If it were the case that Aquinas taught that human beings can reason their way into faith solely by the employment of their natural powers wounded by sin, he would by any standards be heretical. Faith is a gift, not an achievement. There are no arguments with premises about the world that arrive at mysteries of faith as their necessary conclusions. On the other hand, if Aquinas's view were simply that believers in meditating on and assimilating revelation bring to bear whatever enables them better to grasp God's word, no Christian would take exception. *Fides quaerens intellectum* (faith seeking understanding) is how Anselm expressed it at the beginning of the twelfth century. Aquinas's position, however, is more complicated, as readers of this book will learn.

It was Kierkegaard who said that the reason we have forgotten what it is to be a Christian is that we have forgotten what it is to be a person. No one would imagine that Kierkegaard held that the remembering of certain truths about human beings would *produce* Christianity, but the great Dane recognized the truth that Aquinas ceaselessly repeated: grace builds on nature but does not destroy it. What evangelicals will find most interesting, perhaps, is the way in which Aquinas understood Romans 1:19-20, an understanding that goes back at least to Augustine. What does Paul mean when he says that the pagan Romans can from the things that are made come to knowledge of the invisible things of God? Dr. Geisler's discussion of "preambles of faith" in chapter 9 lays before the reader what Aquinas meant by truths about God that can be described even by sinful humankind independently of special grace. Pascal distinguished between the God of the philosophers and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and this book will provide new understanding of that distinction. But just as Paul could preach to the Athenians before the altar of the unknown God and say that it was *that* God he had come to preach, it is the same God who is known imperfectly and with much admixture of error by natural reason and who has revealed himself in Jesus. It goes without saying that such comparisons are made from the side of faith. This book will show

readers how it is that Aquinas is a champion of both faith and reason. It sometimes seems that *only* believers defend the range of reason.

I am flattered and pleased to have been asked to say a few words by way of introduction to this extraordinary book. Dr. Geisler is a man I have known and admired for many years. It is indeed the rare man who can find in an apparent enemy an ally. But Geisler's study of Thomas Aquinas is far more than an instance of the old adage *fas est et ab hoste doceri* (it is right to learn even from the foe). He enables evangelicals and Catholics to see the immense range of truths that unite us, not as some least common denominator, but truths that are at the heart of our Christian faith.

RALPH MCINERNY

CHAPTER 1

THE CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE OF AQUINAS

Should old Aquinas be forgotten and never brought to mind? Many contemporary Catholic and most Protestant thinkers say Yes. I for one would like to register a negative vote. But can a seven-hundred-year-old thinker still be relevant today? Students of logic will recognize the implication of the question as the fallacy of “chronological snobbery.” “New is true” and “old is mold,” we are told. Logic informs us, however, that time has no necessary connection with truth. Or at least, if there were any kind of connection, then the time-honored thought ought to have the edge.

TRADITIONAL EVANGELICAL CRITICISM

There is a stylish reluctance among evangelicals to admit any allegiance to or dependence on Aquinas. After all, wasn’t Aquinas Catholic, not Protestant? Wasn’t his a natural theology resulting from human reason, not a supernatural theology based on divine revelation? And didn’t he hold an unorthodox Aristotelian view of Christianity as opposed to a more congenial Platonic philosophy, such as the Augustinian tradition preserved? Why should evangelicals be pro-Aquinas? Can anything good come out of Rome? Was the Reformation all in vain? Should evangelicals borrow from a quasi-humanistic, heterodoxical, Aristotelian defender of Romanism?

Most evangelicals answer these questions negatively. They join regularly in a harmonious chorus of “Ole Aquinas should be forgot and never brought to mind.” A sample of some major evangelical thinkers will illustrate an almost universal disdain for the Angelic Doctor.

Widely read and highly regarded evangelical writer Francis Schaeffer blames Aquinas for the rise of modern humanism. He charges that Aquinas bifurcates faith and reason, giving autonomy to the latter. Further, Schaeffer claims that Aquinas denies the depravity of humankind, thus making perfectibility possible apart from God. In this way the stage was

set for later humanists to affirm that reason alone is sufficient to resolve our dilemma. Aquinas's separation of faith and reason is an "incipient humanism" where "reason is made an absolute rather than a tool."¹ Due to his wide influence in conservative Protestant circles, Schaeffer's position is taken as gospel by much of evangelicalism.

Reformed apologist Cornelius Van Til is scarcely more complimentary of the medieval saint from Aquino. Thomism, he believes, is based on the "autonomy of man." This, says Van Til, implies that man is "metaphysically distinct from 'god.'" And if so, then "there is on this basis no genuine point of contact with the mind of the natural man at all." Further, "the revelation of a self-sufficient God can have no meaning for a mind that thinks of itself as ultimately autonomous." One of the problems that emerges from this autonomy of reason is "how it may be known that the God of reason and the God of faith are the same."²

Van Til describes Thomism as "a position halfway between that of Christianity and that of paganism." Theistic arguments are invalid and, at any rate, do not lead to the "self-contained ontological trinity of Scripture." In fact, if we follow Thomistic apologetics, "then Christianity itself must be so reduced as to make it acceptable to the natural man".³ Van Til characterizes Aquinas's thought as a hybrid of "the pure staticism of Parmenides and a philosophy of the pure flux of Heraclitus with much the same appearance as is the Christ of modern dialectical Protestantism."⁴

Gordon Clark refers to Aquinas's thought as a "Christianized interpretation of Aristotelianism."⁵ He rejects Aquinas's arguments for God as "circular," purely "formal," "invalid," and "indefensible"⁶ because the skeptic David Hume and the agnostic Immanuel Kant gave irrefutable arguments against proofs for God. As for Aquinas's doctrine of analogous God-talk, Clark confidently declares it to be an "equivocation" based on a "fallacy".⁷

E. J. Carnell, former president of Fuller Seminary, yields to the same temptation to stereotype and stigmatize Aquinas: "Thomas sets out to Christianize Aristotle's God." He, too, accepts the skepticism and agnosticism of Hume and Kant against theistic arguments. These arguments are all empirically based and "from flux only flux can come." Likewise, analogous God-talk is "sheer equivocation" that "makes God

unknowable” and opens “the sluice gate. . .to [other] unknowables when one defends an ‘unknown God.’”⁸

Noted evangelical theologian Carl F. H. Henry parrots the same type of criticism. Accepting the antitheistic conclusions of Hume and Kant, he calls Aquinas’s claims “extravagant” and built on a “debatable epistemology” whose conclusions are “hardly satisfactory.” Furthermore, Aquinas’s views are “betrayed also [by] a minimizing of the revelational insistence on the beclouding effect of sin in the life of man.” In fact, Henry claims that “the acceptance of thomism at the University of Paris after 1275 marks the real break from historic Christianity in the medieval Church”.⁹

Philosopher Arthur Holmes is less than complimentary of Aquinas when he characterizes his view as an emphasis on “the unaided powers of human reason as to press towards a Cartesian position.” Holmes also mistakenly represents Aquinas as believing that “natural philosophy can demonstrate the premises of revealed theology.” Elsewhere he speaks of the “autonomous” nature of Aquinas’s philosophy that “fell apart under the strain of history” when “Aristotelianism fell into disfavor”¹⁰ Holmes also characterizes Aquinas’s view of God as “conceived abstractly as a metaphysical necessity, rather than showing himself concretely as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob”¹¹

On the seven-hundredth anniversary of Aquinas’s death, Ronald Nash had perhaps the best opportunity to praise the relevance of Aquinas, but was reluctant to do so. He settled rather for a few general words of historical commendation, carefully qualified by theological criticism. These were based on alleged but unjustified assertions that the notorious problems of Thomistic philosophy were long ago exposed by Gordon Clark. Nash wrote, “There are two errors [Aristotelian empiricism and metaphysics] so significant that they render Aquinas’s system beyond any hope of salvage.”¹²

With the impressive authority of these evangelical leaders dominating the theological scene for the last generation, there was an almost universal reluctance among other scholars to say a positive word for the Angelic Doctor. There have been, of course, a few secret admirers of Aquinas among us who no doubt crept in unawares. These men have taken

Thomistic positions in natural theology, but even so they are usually careful not to identify themselves as Thomists. John H. Gerstner, Stuart Hackett, R. C. Sproul, and Arvin Vos¹³ are noteworthy exceptions. There are also a few closet Thomists who borrow the arguments of Aquinas without frankly acknowledging their allegiance to him. When all is told, however, there is really a strong but too often silent minority among us who are directly dependent on Aquinas for our basic theology, philosophy, and/or apologetics.¹⁴

The time is overdue for all secret believers to join in a positive word of gratitude for the masterful expression and defense of the historic Christian faith bequeathed to us by this humble giant of the faith. As for myself, I gladly confess that the highest compliment that could be paid to me as a Christian philosopher, apologist, and theologian is to call me “Thomistic.” This, of course, does not mean I accept everything Aquinas wrote naively and uncritically. It does mean that I believe he was one of the greatest systematic minds the Christian church has ever had, and that I can see a lot farther standing on his shoulders than by attacking him in the back. No, I do not agree with everything he ever wrote. On the other hand, neither do I agree with everything I ever wrote. But seven hundred years from now no one will even recognize my name, while Aquinas’s works will still be used with great profit.

THE IRONY OF EVANGELICAL CRITICISM

There is a certain irony and poetic justice involved in much of the criticism of Thomistic thought. Many of those who condemn any kind of rational theology spend commendable effort via human reason and argumentation in order to establish their own view. This use of reason to argue for one’s view of God would warm the heart of the Angelic Doctor. Indeed, even those who argue against rational theology for fideism have a kind of inverse natural theology of their own by virtue of the fact they are using human reason to convince others not to do so. Of course, much of evangelical thought is not very rich philosophically. But a poor man’s philosophy is better than none at all. And in whatever sense we engage in systematic Christian thinking, we are in the broad sense of the term indebted to Aquinas.

What is even more ironic is that often evangelicals criticize Aquinas for holding a view he did not hold, while they unwittingly embrace the same view he did. Their views are often stereotypical distortions mediated through the teaching magisterium of our evangelical scholars. It is embarrassing to confess on behalf of our evangelical cause that it is still all too rare to find evangelical philosophers or apologists who really understand the views of Aquinas. As noted, many of them chastise Aquinas for views he never held. Perhaps first-hand and more sympathetic scholarship would have avoided this embarrassment to us. Others, like Schaeffer, make unsubstantiated claims, blaming Aquinas for the rise of modern secular humanism.

Several examples of evangelical misunderstanding of Aquinas will substantiate this point. There is almost unanimous agreement among evangelical scholars that the Thomistic view of analogy reduces to equivocation and skepticism. The reason given is that unless there is a univocal element in the analogy, we cannot be sure that language means the same thing when applied to God.¹⁵ And if there is a univocal element, then the language is not really analogical but univocal. What this criticism completely fails to understand is that Aquinas's doctrine of analogy allows the use of univocal concepts but denies that finite concepts can be applied in anything but an analogical way to an infinite Being. That is, Thomistic analogy is not a doctrine about the essential unitary meaning of a conception but, rather, refers to the essential analogical nature of a predication. Thomists have written massive works defending this thesis on an exegetical basis, but few evangelicals have read Garrigou-Lagrange, Etienne Gilson, Jacques Maritain, George Peter Klubertanz, Ralph McInerny, and Battista Mondin.¹⁶

Even worse, while criticizing Aquinas for applying finite concepts to God in less than a univocal way, there is scarcely an evangelical thinker who does not do the same thing. Who among us mortals has an infinite concept of the infinite God? Who would claim to have an unlimited knowledge of the Unlimited?¹⁷ But this is precisely what Aquinas means when he says that terms taken from our finite experience—which is the only kind of experience we finite beings have—cannot be applied to God in a univocal way. On the other hand, neither our colleagues nor Aquinas believe that there is a mere equivocal or totally different sense of certain terms as

applied to both God and finite things. But if our language about God is neither totally the same (univocal) nor totally different (equivocal), then it must be similar but not identical, which is exactly what is meant by analogical predication. Why, then, do many evangelicals continue to criticize Aquinas when they hold the same basic position?

A second example will illustrate the irony of evangelical criticism of Aquinas. The *Resurrection of Theism* is one of the finest apologetic books ever produced by an evangelical who in most respects is confessedly a committed Thomist.¹⁸ Yet in it Stuart Hackett takes Aquinas to task for having a tabula rasa empirical epistemology that does not account for the a priori element in knowers that would enable them to recognize truth when they see it.¹⁹ The insistence on an a priori element is well taken and Hackett is essentially right. Knowers must have some a priori inclination to truth with which they are born or else they could never come to know truth. If people were born completely blank slates, they would never be able to know any more than a completely blank slate can. Unfortunately, Hackett wrongly assumes that Aquinas never allows for this a priori element in the knowing process. As a matter of fact, Aquinas speaks of an “innate cognition” of truth. Sometimes he calls this a priori element a “natural inclination” that is “divinely instilled in us by God.” Elsewhere he refers to our minds as being “naturally endowed” with principles “not known by investigation” but “bestowed on us by nature”²⁰

In fact, “there is nothing in the intellect that has not first been in the senses, except intellect itself.”²¹ And there is within the intellect “preformed germs of which we have natural knowledge.” In Aquinas’s own words there is a “power of the soul” or “a form of nature,” a “natural appetite” or inclination toward the truth that is not derived from sense experience but is the indispensable prerequisite of meaning and truth.²² Hackett is entirely right in defending this a priori element in the knowing process. But he is completely wrong in supposing Aquinas does not hold that there is an a priori, innate power or natural inclination to truth in us.

Cornelius Van Til, in a very frank summary of his own method in apologetics, castigates the “traditional method”: “This method compromises God himself by maintaining that his existence is only ‘possible’ albeit ‘highly probable,’ rather than ontologically and

‘rationally’ necessary.” Further, “it compromises the counsel of God by not understanding it as the only all-inclusive, ultimate ‘cause’ of whatever comes to pass.” In addition, “it compromises the revelation of God by . . . compromising its *authority*. On the traditional position the Word of God’s self-attesting characteristic, and therewith its authority, is secondary to the authority of reason and experience.”

We claim, therefore, that Christianity alone is reasonable for men to hold. It is wholly irrational to hold any other position than that of Christianity. Christianity alone does not slay reason on the altar of “chanced.” . . . The only “proof” of the Christian is that unless its truth is presupposed there is no possibility of “proving” anything at all.

Van Til also insists that we present the message and evidence for the Christian position as clearly as possible, “knowing that”, the non-Christian will be able to understand in an intellectual sense the issues involved. In so doing, we shall, to a large extent, be telling him what he ‘already knows’ but seeks to suppress. This ‘reminding’ process provides a fertile ground for the Holy Spirit.”

Finally, Van Til contends that “finite beings, by means of logic as such, [cannot] say what reality *must* be or *cannot* be.” It is wrong that “man must be autonomous, ‘logic’ must be legislative as to the field of ‘possibility’ and possibility must be above God.”²³

What is so strange about this whole apologetic is how Thomistic it really is. Aquinas would heartily agree with virtually everything Van Til says. Aquinas would agree:

- (1) that speaking in the realm of being (metaphysics), logic is dependent on God and not God on logic;²⁴
- (2) that the existence of God is ontologically necessary;²⁵
- (3) that without God nothing could be either known or proven to be true;²⁶
- (4) that the basis for Christian truth is neither reason nor experience but the authority of God as expressed in Scripture;²⁷ and

(5) that there is a revelation of God in nature that depraved natural humankind is willfully repressing.²⁸

Of course, it would be naive to assume Van Til is a Thomist in disguise. But he is far closer to Aquinas than he is willing to admit, probably because his understanding of Aquinas is more remote than he realizes. The basic difference between Van Til and Aquinas is that while they both agree *ontologically* that all truth depends on God, Van Til fails to fully appreciate the fact that finite people must ask *epistemologically* how we know this to be a fact. In short, Van Til confuses the order of being and the order of knowing. (A corollary difference is that Van Til holds a coherence view of truth and Aquinas a correspondence view.) If there is a theistic God, then surely everything Van Til says is true. But we cannot beg the whole question and merely assume or presuppose the theistic God of Christianity. Our presuppositions cannot be arbitrary, or our apologetics is merely an arbitrary way of begging the question. If, on the other hand, we argue, as Van Til implies that we should, that Christian theism is a rationally necessary position, then it is difficult to see on what rational grounds we could criticize Aquinas for providing rational support for it. What Aquinas would ask of Van Til's apologetical approach is this: How do you know the Christian position is true? If Van Til answers, "Because it is the only truly rational view," then perhaps the medieval saint would reply, "That is exactly what I believe. Welcome, dear brother, to the club of red-blooded rational theists."

Space does not permit the debunking of all evangelical myths about Aquinas, but several more significant ironies occur. Many of our colleagues will repeat with Tertullian vigor: "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What have the God of revelation and the God of reason in common? What concord is there between the God of Aquinas's demonstrations and the God of Abraham's revelations?" Then, oftentimes, scarcely more than a breath or two later, they will decry the Thomistic separation of faith and reason, when their very question implies an even more radical separation between the two domains.

Aquinas's answer as to how one identifies the God of revelation and reason is very clear. There is a formal distinction between faith and reason as procedures, but there is no actual bifurcation of them in the believer.²⁹

The individual as philosopher can understand certain things about God via his natural revelation (Psalm 19; Acts 14, 17; Romans 1-2). But the individual as believer in God's supernatural revelation has access to much more truth about God. We make similar distinctions today. A scientist who is a Christian says, "As scientist I know that the moon is a celestial body that revolves around the earth about every 28 days and reflects the rays of the sun. But as a believer I know and accept that the moon was created by God and reflects his glory." But we would not say that this is a bifurcation in the scientist's functions, simply because he has used two different methods that yield different information about the same thing.

The Thomistic distinction between faith and reason is no more radical than this one. In fact, it is the evangelical fideists and quasi-fideists who make the radical separation between the God of revelation and the God of reason. They try to build an unspannable Kantian gulf between philosophy and theology, between God's revelation in nature and his revelation in Scripture. How can we identify the God of the cosmological argument and the God of the Judeo-Christian revelation?

Aquinas's answer to this question is deceptively simple: "And this we all understand to be God"³⁰ Why do we all understand the Infinite Cause of all that exists to be God? Aquinas insists that there cannot be two infinitely

perfect beings, both of which are the cause of all the finite things that exist.³¹ If there were two infinitely perfect beings, they would have to really differ to be really different. But if they really differed, one would have to possess some perfection that the other lacked. And if the other lacked this perfection, then it would not be infinitely perfect. Hence, it would not be God, since it lacked in perfection. It follows, then, that only one being can be absolutely perfect. But both the God of the cosmological argument and the God of Scripture are held to be infinitely perfect. Therefore, they must be one and the same God. So rather than maintaining an ultimate separation of the objects of faith and reason, such as quasi-fideistic evangelicals do, Thomism restores the ultimate unity between the God of the natural and the supernatural revelations.

Another interesting incongruity occurs in evangelical criticism of Thomistic thought. Very often the charge is leveled that Aquinas's faith in the

Christian God is based on reason and evidence rather than on the authoritative revelation of God. Van Til speaks of this as “the authority of reason and experience.” If all truth comes as a revelation from God, then God’s authority, not human reason, is the ultimate basis for our belief in the Christian God.³² But here again Aquinas is in full agreement.

First, Aquinas strongly stresses that the truths of the Christian faith are above reason. While they are not contrary to reason, they are nonetheless unreachable by mere human reason and can only be known by way of supernatural revelation. But some Christian truth is above human reason and, therefore, cannot be based on human reasoning or experience.

Second, even the probable and historical type of evidence for Christianity cannot be used as the basis for belief.³³ God alone is the basis for believing in God. The authoritative self-revelation of God is the only basis for Christian response. We may reason about and for God’s revelation, but we must never use reason as a basis for accepting it. God should be believed for his own sake—for his Word’s sake—and not for the sake of the evidence or reasons about him or his revelation. Faith should be placed in the God of the evidence and not in the evidence for God. This is not an incidental point for Aquinas; he goes to great length to make it clear. And yet the full force of his distinction is almost universally misunderstood in evangelical circles.

In point of fact, a proper understanding and application of this distinction can make a most significant contribution to contemporary apologetics. It can provide a needed mediation between opposing camps in evangelical apologetics. In the one camp are presuppositionalists, who claim that revelation must be accepted because it is God’s revelation by faith and not because of any alleged rational proofs we may have for it. On the other side are the classical apologists, who insist that we have evidences for our faith that make it unnecessary to simply believe it on authority alone. Aquinas would agree with both groups and reconcile the difference as follows. There is no evidence, either rational or experiential, for believing *in* God. God’s authoritative self-disclosures are the only basis for our belief in him. There are good reasons, however, for believing *that the* theistic God exists and *that the* Bible is his revelation.³⁴ We do not believe in God because of (or based on) evidence. Rather, we believe in God because of

who he is and because of the sovereign but worthy authority he possesses by virtue of his supreme Godhood.

On the other hand, it would be idolatrous for us to make a leap of faith toward, or an ultimate commitment to, what is less than this sovereign and ultimately worthy God. We must possess good reasons and evidence for believing *that* it is this God we face before we believe *in* him for his own sake. Likewise, we must have reasons and evidence *that the* Bible is God's Word, as opposed to the Koran or the Book of Mormon, before we believe *in the* Bible as God's self-disclosed authority to us. Aquinas would argue that God must be believed in simply because he is God, and his revelations must be accepted simply because they come from his authority. That is the only adequate basis for Christian belief. On the other hand, he would agree that we must have good reasons for believing that there is a God and that the Bible is the Word of God, otherwise belief is without justification.

AQUINAS AND EVANGELICAL THOUGHT

There are numerous ways Aquinas can contribute to evangelical thought. We will only mention some of these contributions in summary form. The rest of this book will provide more detail.

First, Aquinas's view of the nature and interpretation of Scripture is helpful in the current debate on inerrancy and hermeneutics. While he strongly holds to the divine origin and inerrant nature of Scripture, nonetheless he has great appreciation of its human characteristics and profound understanding of the relation between its divine and human elements. In addition, Aquinas was a forerunner of the literal hermeneutic and a first-rate exegete of Scripture

Second, Aquinas can help us build a solid theistic basis for doing historical apologetics. It makes no sense to speak of miracles or interventions of God (*e.g.*, the resurrection) that prove that Christ was the Son of God, unless we have first established that there is a God who makes it possible to count this event as a miracle. Theistic apologetics is the logical prerequisite of historical apologetics. Aquinas can help us do this foundational theistic work.³⁵

Third, Aquinas can provide a philosophical answer to the growing influence of the finite god of process theology. There is no better philosophical system capable of answering the threat raised by process theology and defending the traditional theistic and biblical view of God as an eternal, unchanging, and absolutely perfect Being. Aquinas can give immeasurable help in responding to this growing movement of process thought that follows Alfred North Whitehead.³⁶

Fourth, Thomistic analogy seems to be the only adequate answer to the problem of religious. Without analogy there appears to be no way to avoid the sheer equivocation of skepticism (with its noncognitive myths, parables, models, and blik)s or the idolatrous dogmatism of a univocal one-to-one correspondence between our finite ideas and the infinite mind of God. The middle road of analogy is one that was trod seven hundred years before us, and it still appears to be the best one. We can learn more about it from the scholastic sage.

Fifth, the value of Aquinas in overcoming the separation of the God of reason and of revelation has already been noted above. So too, we have already spoken of Aquinas's reconciliation of the role of reason and evidence with the authoritative revelations of God.

Sixth, Aquinas makes a major contribution in the area of epistemology. His answer to the age-old question of which elements in the knowing process are innate and which are acquired is both insightful and enduring. Without sacrificing its contact with the real world through the senses, he shows how it is possible to know eternal truths by human reason.

Seventh, Aquinas's answer to the relation of faith and reason is a surprising synthesis of the best elements of rationalism and existentialism. It preserves the sanctity of faith without sacrificing the necessity of reason. It stresses the need for faith without diminishing the importance of reason.

Finally, Aquinas addresses reconciliation of human freedom and divine sovereignty, the nature of divine and human law, Parmenidean monism, and the problem of evil. On these issues, Aquinas adds significantly to a deeper understanding and better defense of the evangelical faith.

OVERCOMING EVANGELICAL ANTIPATHY

Before concluding this chapter, I wish to offer a proposal for overcoming some of the obstacles to a greater evangelical appreciation of Aquinas. First and foremost is the need for a first-hand reading of Aquinas. Few Thomistic critics are Thomistic scholars. One critic of Aquinas actually wrote out his criticisms of Aquinas and then asked his students to find citations from Aquinas that would support his conclusions. Most criticism of Aquinas is based on either stereotyped textbook scholasticism or second-hand evangelical pseudoscholarship. If these critics interpreted the Bible the way they approach Aquinas—through second-hand critical distortions—we would justly cry “Foul!” In order to appreciate Aquinas, we must read him firsthand for ourselves. It is not necessary to be a Latin scholar to do so. His basic writings are translated into English.

Second, it is well to remember that many of our great theistic apologists of the last two centuries—including William Paley, Joseph Butler, F. R. Tennant, Robert Flint, B. B. Warfield, Charles Hodge, and C. S. Lewis—are to a large degree indebted to Aquinas. Let us not forget the friendly theistic hand of the saintly doctor that has fed us.

Third, as even Aquinas would readily admit, we need not accept all that he said on physics in order to learn from his metaphysics. Nor need we accept all he said about the church in order to learn from what he taught about God. We need not be Catholics in order to learn from his theology. Indeed, Anglican Thomists like Eric Mascall, Jewish Thomists like Mortimer J. Adler, Reformed Thomists like John Gerstner, and Baptist Thomists like Stuart Hackett are proof positive that this is not necessary.

Finally, a frank ecumenical confession of our prejudice would be commendable. In our Reformation zeal we have thrown out the Thomistic baby with the Romanistic bath water. My plea is this: the baby is alive and well. Let us take it to our evangelical bosom, bathe it in a biblically based theology, and nourish it to its full strength. As a mature evangelical, Aquinas is a more articulate defender of the faith than anyone in our midst.

CHAPTER 2

THE LIFE OF AQUINAS

The traditional biographies of Aquinas are greatly embellished. Stories about his unusual birth, temptation, and even levitation were part of thirteenth-century legend.¹ Beneath the mass of mythological material it is sometimes difficult to determine what is true. James Weisheipl frankly confesses that “most of the legends of his early childhood narrated by William of Tocco and Bernard of Gui have been considered nothing more than ordinary family anecdotes.”² Factual material, however, can be derived from his writings, teaching career, official records of the groups with which he was associated, his biography (by Bernard of Gui), and the Bull of Canonization.

EARLY YEARS (1224?-1238)

There is no extant birth record of Aquinas. The date must be inferred from the alleged age he was when he entered the Dominican Order or began to teach at the university. Others use Aquinas’s age at death (either forty-eight or forty-nine³) Estimates of his birth date range from A.D. 1221 to 1227. Many place Aquinas’s birth at 1224 or 1225. Chenu says that “Saint Thomas was born near Aquino, in southern Italy, in the fortified castle of Roccasecca, either at the end of 1224 or at the beginning of 1225.”⁴

Aquinas’s father came from Aquino, Italy, a town north of Monte Cassino half-way between Rome and Naples. He was called “Count Landulf” of Aquino, but was probably more of a knight than a noble,⁵ The title of count ended in 1137, a century before his time. Landulf and his brother Ronald II were apparently aspiring young adventurers who seized the castle of Roccasecca by force and stole the title of nobility with the aid of Emperor Frederick II. They were probably feudal lords.⁶

Aquinas’s father died around 1244.⁷ His mother, Theodora, survived her husband by about ten years.⁸ Some say she was a countess or sister of the emperor, a noble Norman. But she may be confused with the countess who married Aquinas’s great-great-grandfather (also named Thomas). The

story may be a French fabrication designed to get Norman blood in the family.

The estimated number of Aquinas's brothers and sisters ranges between six and fourteen, but many of these alleged siblings are probably other relatives. Foster claims there were twelve children. Scandone concludes there were seven sons—Aimo, James, Adenulf, Philip, Landulf, Reginald, and Thomas—and five daughters—Marotta (Martha), Mary, Theodora, Adelasia, and an unnamed daughter who died in infancy.⁹ Pelster, however, believes the number of sons was four, holding that James, Adenulf, and Philip were sons of a second cousin of Landulf, Thomas, count of Acerra.¹⁰ He also subtracts Adelasia, who he believes is a niece, not a sister,¹¹

Aquinas did have a brother Aimo, who defected to Emperor Frederick II and was exiled. Another brother, Ronald, sided with the pope. This was considered an act of treason by Frederick, and led to Ronald's execution. The story that Aquinas was told that the soul of his brother Landulf was in purgatory is probably legendary. His sister Marotta (Martha) was an abbess. Some scholars believe Theodora, Mary, and Addasia were not actual siblings of Aquinas. There is another story (perhaps legendary) about an unnamed sister who was killed by lightning.

If Aquinas was eighteen when he entered the Dominicans or Order of Preachers (O.P.), then his date of birth would have been around 1224 or 1225. Some claim that he was a child prodigy and was inducted early. If so, then the Dominicans apparently had to break the rules to get him in sooner. Likewise, some claim that the age requirement for Masters was thirty-five, but here again Aquinas may have been sneaked in early. Foster believes that "Thomas tried to excuse himself on the grounds of insufficient age and learning; he was now in fact, about thirty years old."¹² Assuming Aquinas was eighteen years old when he joined the Dominicans, then he was born around A.D. 1224 (or 1225). At any rate the year of his birth was undoubtedly between 1221 and 1225.

Others use the alleged age at which Aquinas died to determine the date of his birth. Since we do know that he died in 1274, if his age at death could be fixed, this would be determinative of the date of his birth. There is, however, disagreement at this point too. The earliest source (William of

Tocco) states that Aquinas “was in the forty-ninth year of his Life” when he died.¹³ This would mean that he was forty-eight, not yet having reached his forty-ninth birthday. This would place his birth in 1225-26. Bernard of Gui, on the other hand, writing after he had read Tocco, claims Aquinas died “in the completion of his forty-ninth year,” that is, when he was still forty-nine.¹⁴ This would place his birth in 1224-25, a widely accepted date.

Aquinas was born in the castle his father had seized at Roccasecca, which according to Walz, is still standing and easily discernible by its gothic architecture.¹⁵ He was probably not born in a little house in the lower wall, as some claim. This is probably a later legendary attempt to reflect the humble birth of Christ. Actually, this is an unlikely place for an aspiring count to have his son born. At age five Aquinas was inducted into the abbey at Monte Cassino and instructed by the Benedictines there. Bartholomew of Capua later testified to this under oath. Aquinas makes a possible allusion to this in *Questiones de quodlibet* when asked if it is right to induct a five-year-old into a religious order.

Aquinas’s father wanted him to be an abbot as soon as possible. He was received into oblation by his uncle Landulf Simboldo. It was later discovered that a gift was given at this time to the Benedictines, apparently a customary way of gaining entrance into the order. According to the Rules of St. Benedict, parents of the oblate could give a gift to the monastery. Rule 59 reads: “If. . .they should wish to give an alms to the monastery for their own gain, let them make such a gift as suiteth them, and, if they will, reserve the fruits thereof for themselves”.¹⁶ Such a gift from Aquinas’s parents is recorded and dated May 3, 1231.

Little is known about life at the abbey, or whether this was a positive or negative influence on the young Aquinas. While there he was probably tutored in science, arts, letters, and morals. The traditional education in the Quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music) and Trivium (logic, grammar, rhetoric) occurred later. Earlier forms of these subjects, however, may have been taught to Aquinas. According to Walz, reading and writing were taught, along with moral and religious principles. “Reading was practiced in the liturgical books, and so in the Sacred Scriptures themselves.”¹⁷

The education of Aquinas was cut short when the monastery was stormed by his relatives. Their efforts were supported by Frederick II in one of his many excommunications by the pope. Some say Aquinas was twelve at the time, but he was probably fourteen or fifteen, since he was considered a “young genius.”

UNIVERSITY STUDIES AT NAPLES (1239-1244)

The university at Naples, Italy, was established in 1224 by Frederick II as the first state university.¹⁸ It was operated in competition with the pope’s universities in Paris and Bologna. The clergy were thrown out the same year Aquinas entered (1239). He matriculated in spite of the fact that the pope threatened excommunication to any who attended Frederick’s universities. In response, Emperor Frederick II threatened imprisonment to any who went to papal universities.

The pope had also condemned the “reading” of Aristotle, although there is some confusion over whether this referred merely to official public “reading” (*i.e.*, teaching) or to any private reading. “Reading” in the thirteenth-century university, however, was understood in the technical sense of “teaching.” A teacher, for example, “read” his text.¹⁹ Frederick II, on the contrary, commanded the study of Aristotle. Since Arabian philosophers were experts in Aristotelian philosophy, he brought them in to teach it. Hence, the university was an Avicennian and Averroistic hotbed.

Aquinas had three Aristotelian teachers at the university: Master Martin, Peter of Ireland, and Erasmus (not to be confused with the Erasmus of Luther’s day). It was here at the university that the first signs of his genius emerged. Foster claims that “even as he made such swift progress through grammar, logic and natural science, God had begun to inspire him with the idea of wholly renouncing the world by entering the Order of the Preaching Friars.”²⁰ His grasp of the material was such that he coached other students in their studies. Aquinas joined the Order of Preachers around 1243 or 1244— spite of the violent opposition of his parents.²¹

The reasons given by historians as to why Aquinas joined the Dominicans vary. Grabmann maintains that he liked the color of the habit—a doubtful hypothesis on the face of it for a young genius. Others claim Aquinas was

attracted by the “new spirit of the age.” This is more plausible in view of his subsequent life, especially if “the spirit of the age” includes the intellectual challenge of the times. Mandonnet sums up the reason for the founding of the Order of Preachers, which probably appealed to Aquinas:

[It] was very dosely bound up with the general needs that were making themselves felt in the Christian world at the start of the XIIIth century. Having brought religious life to a new stage of development, the Church of Rome decided to make use of it in order to solve some of the urgent problems with which she was confronted. . . [It needed] a Church militia that was both well-lettered and actually in contact with the social life of the times.²²

It is not certain how old Aquinas was at this point. The Constitution of Dominicans demanded eighteen as a minimum age for enlistees. If Aquinas was only eighteen, then his birth would have been around 1224 (or 1225).

INCARCERATION BY HIS FAMILY (C. 1244)

After this Aquinas was incarcerated by his family for a period of one to three years. Foster believes it was for two years.²³ The exact reason for the incarceration is not dear, but it seems to be tied to political struggles in which his family was often involved on the side of the emperor against the pope. Here again Foster seems to embellish the event, declaring that Aquinas’s brothers found Thomas with four friars of the Order, resting from the fatigues of the journey by the wayside spring; and immediately—behaving like enemies rather than brothers—seized him and carried him off by force. But they first tried to make him take off his religious habit, ordering him to do so at first, and then, since he would not obey, attempting to tear it from him violently; but he put up such a resistance that, for fear of wounding him, they had to let him continue to wear it.²⁴

Fanciful stories, stemming from the accounts of Tocco and Gui, of Aquinas’s family-forced temptation by a beautiful young, seductress are interesting but probably legendary. Walz is no doubt correct in agreeing with Mandonnet, “who sees in the account of Tocco and Gui of the girdle of chastity not a material reality but rather the expression of an inner meaning.”²⁵ The temptress is described as a “lovely but shameless girl, a very viper in human form [who] was admitted to the room where Thomas

was sitting alone, to corrupt his innocence with wanton words and touches.” In response, “springing toward the fire that burned in his room, Thomas seized a burning log from it and drove out the temptress, the bearer of lust’s fire”²⁶—a beautiful but fanciful description at best. Aquinas, like other monks, did take a vow of chastity, a vow arising no doubt out of deep religious motivation. Some believe, however, that he had a basic fear of women.

Just why his family held him captive is not clear. There is no reason to believe his family was vicious. It was probably simply a further stage in the political struggles in which his family was involved. Apparently, in one of their many “ins and outs” with the pope, this was an “out.” At any rate, they apparently wanted to rescue Aquinas from the Order of Preachers, just as they had seized him earlier from the Benedictines. His eventual release came when his uncle Ronald was caught plotting against Frederick II. This was apparently an attempt to regain the pope’s favor.

In short, the Aquinas family seemed to move with the political winds, as they blew back and forth between the pope and the emperor. Thomas was apparently a pawn in their political games on at least two occasions.

FURTHER STUDIES AT PARIS AND COLOGNE (1245-1248)

The Christian university of the thirteenth century has been called “the oven in which the intellectual bread of the Latin world was baked.”²⁷ A letter of February 4, 1254, from the University of Paris to the church is a rich source of information about the university:

It was God’s own right hand that planted in Paris this venerable Studium, a fountain of wisdom, divided into four faculties: theology, law, medicine, and philosophy (the last divided into three parts: rational, natural, and moral), which like the four rivers of paradise directed the four quarters of the world, water and enrich the whole earth, so that inestimable advantage both spiritual and temporal is brought to Christendom.²⁸

Beginning sometime around 1245 Aquinas began studying under Albert the Great in the Convent of St. James in the University of Paris. It is said that Albert incited him to study and to silence. Aquinas was “a quiet boy

with an unusually mature bearing; saying little, but already thinking much; rather silent and serious and, seemingly, much given to prayer.”²⁹ It is probably from this meditative silence that he obtained the nickname “dumb ox.” Albert’s prophetic retort to the title was: “We call this lad a ‘dumb ox,’ but I tell you that the whole world is going to hear his roar.”³⁰ Aquinas went to Cologne with Albert and helped start a school for the Dominicans (1248-1252). Here he held the position of bachelor lecturer, a minor young teacher. It was here also, according to the Bull of Canonization, that he was ordained to the priesthood.

Frederick II died on December 13, 1250, and the pope took his empire.³¹ The Aquinas family was understandably working hard for the pope. About this time it is alleged that Aquinas was offered Monte Casino Abbey. But this is unlikely, since it was Benedictine and he was a Dominican.

RETURN TO PARIS TO TEACH AT THE UNIVERSITY (1252-1259)

From this point details about Aquinas’s life are more clear, since they are directly connected to his abundantly documented teaching and writing career. Around 1252 Aquinas returned to the University of Paris. When Aquinas entered, the secular-religious fight was in full swing. As scholars have noted, “the University, at this time, was the scene of a bitter struggle, due precisely to the rivalries between the seculars and religious.”³² The seculars (priests belonging to no religious order) were jealous of the mendicants (priests belonging to religious orders). The seculars may have been envious of the success of the religious orders. Or, more likely, they may have felt that the mendicants were instruments of the pope.³³ In a letter of Alexander IV, written on June 17, 1256, we read:

The aforesaid masters and students have had no care, as we well know, to preserve that concord which the thorns of discord have assailed. They have opposed in the most unworthy manner those who desired to attend the lectures, disputations, and sermons of the friars, and in particular those who wished to be present at the inaugural lecture of our beloved son Fr. Thomas d’Aquino.³⁴

A fight broke out over the chair of John of St. Giles, who left the seculars for the Dominican Order. The Dominicans then claimed his chair. The seculars insisted that the defection of the teacher was from his chair, not with it. The mendicants proceeded to drive out seculars, and the police were called in to still the riot. Pope Alexander IV restored the seculars' academic privileges around 1255. But the resulting tension was so great that by the next year King Louis had to provide a military guard to protect the Dominicans. Chenu notes that Aquinas was "at the heart of the controversy, which almost turned into an open battle."³⁵

Aquinas himself was one source of the tension. University law said teachers had to be thirty years of age. Aquinas was well under age, so he was disliked. The Dominicans, on the other hand, wanted their most articulate spokesman at the university, and they were apparently willing to bend the rules to make this possible.

Between 1252 and 1256 Aquinas lectured on the Bible and the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, a widely used textbook of theological propositions. In 1256 he received his *licentia* to teach. Subsequently, the pope appointed him to a chair at the university. His *principium* (inaugural lecture), taken from Baruch 4:1,³⁶ was boycotted, but in August 1257, Pope Alexander IV forced the university to accept both Aquinas and a young Franciscan teacher named Boniventure. By 1259 another papal decree was necessary to restore order at the university.

RETURN TO ITALY (1259-1268)

For the next decade Aquinas taught at several papal curiae in Italy. From 1259 to 1261 he served at the School of Anagni under Pope Alexander IV. Later he taught at the papal curia of Orvieto under Pope Urban IV (1261-1264) and the School of Viterbo under Pope Clement IV (1267-68). It is here that Aquinas met William Moerbeke, who was making fresh translations of Aristotle from the Greek on which Aquinas was later to base his famous commentaries. Christian writers prior to this point had depended on an Aristotle mediated to them through the skewed Platonic eyes of Arabian commentators. The influence of medieval Platonic thought was lessening.

FINAL RETURN TO PARIS TO TEACH (1268-1272)

The old religious-secular controversy broke out again and Aquinas was called back to Paris. The fight was so hot that the usually calm Aquinas wrote an uncharacteristically heated booklet entitled *Contra pestiferam* (*Against the Plague-Bearers*). Some of Aquinas's students even stood up in his class and read St. Amour's pamphlet against him.

The other controversy at the time was that of the Averroists (unorthodox Aristotelians). Averroes (1126-1198), the great Muslim philosopher, was called "the commentator" in Aquinas's writings. Averroes denied that man had either a passive or active intellect, claiming both were universal. This, of course, was contrary to the traditional Christian belief that each individual had a distinct mind, rather than being part of some pantheistic universal Mind.

Averroes was highly rationalistic, claiming nothing is to be believed but what is self-evident or reducible to it. In addition, he held that creation and matter were eternal, contradicting the Christian teaching that creation had a beginning. The Latin Averroists of the time, including Siger of Brabant and Boetius of Dacia, even went so far as to separate faith and philosophy. They espoused a "double truth" view, holding simultaneously to contradictory truths: one from reason and the other from revelation. They also claimed that creation is eternal, the soul is mortal, there is one universal Intellect for all people, and there are no miracles. It is this heretical tide of Plotinian thought that history credits Aquinas with stemming.

Despite the intense controversy in which Aquinas engaged the unorthodox Averroists, at his death they wrote to the Preachers a most warm letter in which they begged to have his last writings as well as the honor of preserving his remains at Paris, calling him "so good a cleric, so kind a father, so outstanding a doctor."³⁷

RETURN TO ITALY AND DEATH (1272-1274)

It is not certain why Aquinas returned to Naples. It is possible that the Dominicans were bribed to get him out of France. The brother of the king of France did give gold at this time to the Dominicans. On the other hand,

Aquinas may have simply been called back to resume duties at a papal school.

Near the end of his life Aquinas stopped his scholarly pursuits. After December 6, 1273, he wrote no more, leaving even his great *Summa theologiae* unfinished. According to Bartholomew, who was closer to the incident than others, Aquinas expressed the reason for not writing to Reginald as follows: “I cannot; all that I have written seems like straw.”³⁸ It is assumed by some that Aquinas had a mystical experience, in view of which everything else paled into insignificance. Weisheipl, although not ruling out a mystical experience, points out that Aquinas apparently had a “physical breakdown resulting in a mental disturbance, anxiety, and a change in emotional values wherein the *Summa* and the Aristotelian commentaries no longer seemed important.”³⁹

We do know that Aquinas engaged in a physically exhausting daily schedule, which may have contributed to his breakdown? Weisheipl notes that Aquinas adhered to a “strict regimen.” He arose early in the morning and attended two services at the chapel. After this, he immediately began his teaching. After descending from the [professorial] chair, he set himself to write or dictate to his many secretaries until the time for dinner. After dinner he went to his cell to pray until siesta time, after which he resumed his writing and dictating. After working late at night, he spent considerable time praying in the chapel of St. Nicholas before the brethren arose for Matins [prayers]; when the bell for Matins sounded, he quickly returned to his cell and appeared to have risen with the rest. After Matins he seems to have gone to bed.⁴¹

Aquinas died on March 4, 1274, at Fossanova on the way to the Council of Lyons. Speculation ranges widely on why he was attending the council. Some say to be condemned; others say to be commended. Some of Aristotle’s philosophy, which Aquinas utilized in expressing the Christian faith, was condemned in 1277 by the bishop of Paris.⁴² But Aquinas was canonized in 1326, and shortly after the Protestant Reformation he was made a Doctor of the Church (1567). In 1879 he was proclaimed a Father of the Church in the papal proclamation *Aeterni patris*. In 1880 he was made the patron of schools in the Catholic Church. Up until the time of Vatican II, his philosophy dominated Catholic schools. Although his

influence has been somewhat diminished within Catholic circles, it is presently increasing particularly among evangelical Protestants.

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THE WRITINGS OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

Aquinas wrote some ninety works.⁴³ Many of these works are multivolume sets. There are also several works of uncertain authenticity attributed to him.⁴⁴ The Latin-English edition of the *Summa theologiae*, for example, is approximately sixty volumes. Likewise, *De veritate* and *Summa contra Gentiles* are multivolume sets. Aquinas's works represent the whole gamut of theological, philosophical, biblical, and ethical topics. The most famous and mature work is the *Summa theologiae*, one of the most massive and systematic theologies ever produced. The *Summa contra*

Gentiles is more easily read because it is less technical and dialectical. One of the most widely published small works, *On Being and Essence*, provides the essence of his philosophy. His most popular theological work is his *Compendium of Theology*, and by far the most widely acclaimed work on Scripture is his *Catena aurea* (*Golden Chain*) of quotations from the fathers on the four Gospels.

Aquinas's life was a model of spiritual commitment and intellectual rigor. By any standard, his writings are a massive achievement of the human mind, especially for someone who died before he was fifty years of age. The fact that many of his works are translated into most of the major languages of the world and are still studied and followed extensively today, by both Catholics and non-Catholics, is ample testimony to their enduring value. He was one of the greatest Christian thinkers of all time. So whether one agrees with all he taught, it is obvious that old Aquinas has not been forgotten.

CHAPTER 3

AN OVERVIEW OF THE THOUGHT OF AQUINAS

The thought of Aquinas is rich and varied. He wrote on many topics, including faith and reason, revelation, knowledge, reality, God, analogy, creation, human beings, government, and ethics. His mind was intensely analytic, making his arguments difficult for the modern reader to follow. Furthermore, his style is sometimes dialectical and highly complex. So that the reader does not get lost in the intricacies of Aquinas's views, it will be helpful to present an introductory summary of many of his basic ideas, especially those of interest to evangelicals. The rest of the book will then treat these major topics in more depth.

REVELATION

God has revealed himself in both nature and Scripture. His natural revelation (Romans 1:19-20) is available to all people and is the basis for natural theology. The creation reveals one God and his essential attributes, but not the Trinity or the unique doctrines of the Christian faith, such as the incarnation of Christ or the way of salvation. This revelation in nature also includes a moral law that is binding on all people (Romans 2:12-15).

God's divine law is for believers; it is revealed in Scripture. Although written by humans utilizing different literary styles,¹ the Bible is the only divinely authoritative writing.² The Bible is inspired and inerrant, even in matters that are not essential to our redemption.³ No other Christian writing, neither the fathers nor the creeds, are inspired or revelatory. They are only human interpretations of God's revelation in Scripture.⁴

FAITH AND REASON

Following Augustine, Aquinas believes faith is based on God's revelation in Scripture. Support for faith, however, is found in miracles and probable arguments.⁵ Although God's existence is provable by reason, sin obscures our ability to know⁶ and so belief (not proof) *that* God exists is necessary for most persons.⁷ Human reason, however, is never the basis for faith *in*

God. Demanding reasons for belief in God actually lessens the merit of faith.⁸ Believers, nonetheless, should reason about and for their faith.

According to Aquinas, there are five ways we can use reason to demonstrate God's existence. We can argue:

- (1) from motion to an Unmoved Mover;
- (2) from effects to a First Cause;
- (3) from contingent being to a Necessary Being;
- (4) from degrees of perfection to a Most Perfect Being; and
- (5) from design in nature to a Designer of nature.⁹

Behind these arguments is the premise that all finite, changing beings need a cause outside themselves.

There are mysteries of the Christian faith, however, such as the Trinity and the incarnation, which cannot be known by human reason but only by faith in God's revelation in Scripture.¹⁰ These go beyond reason, but are not contrary to reason.

KNOWLEDGE

Aquinas believes that knowledge comes either by supernatural revelation (in Scripture) or by natural means. All natural knowledge begins in experience.¹¹ We are born, however, with an a priori, natural, innate capacity to know.¹² Everything that is in our mind was first in the senses, except the mind itself.

Knowing something for certain is possible by means of first principles. First principles are known by way of inclination before they are known by cognition. These include:

- (1) the principle of identity (being is being);
- (2) the principle of noncontradiction (being is not nonbeing);
- (3) the principle of excluded middle (either being or nonbeing);
- (4) the principle of causality (nonbeing cannot cause being); and

(5) the principle of finality (every being acts for an end).

By these first principles the mind can attain knowledge of reality—even some certain knowledge. Once the terms are properly understood, these first principles are self-evident, that is, they are undeniable.¹³

REALITY

Like Aristotle, Aquinas believes it is the function of the wise person to know order. The order reason produces in its own ideas is called logic. The order reason produces through acts of the will is known as ethics. The order reason produces in external things is art. The order reason contemplates (but does not produce) is nature. Nature contemplated insofar as it is sensible is physical science. Nature studied insofar as it is quantifiable is mathematics.¹⁴ Nature or reality studied insofar as it is real is metaphysics. Metaphysics, then, is the study of the real as real or being insofar as it is being.

The heart of Aquinas's metaphysics is the real distinction between essence (*what* something is) and existence (*that* which is) in all finite beings.¹⁵ Aristotle had distinguished between actuality and potentiality, but applied this only to things composed of form and matter, not to the order of being as such. Aquinas takes Aristotle's distinction between act and potency and applies it to form (being).

Aquinas argues that only God is Pure Being, Pure Actuality, with no potentiality whatsoever. Hence, the central premise of the Thomistic view of reality is that act in the order in which it is act is unlimited and unique, unless it is cojoined with passive potency. God alone is Pure Act (or Actuality) with no potentiality or form. Angels are completely actualized potentialities (pure Forms). Humankind is a composition of form (soul) and matter (body) which is progressively actualized.

GOD

God alone is Being (I am-ness). Everything else merely *has* being. God's essence is identical to his existence. It is of his essence to exist. That is, God is a Necessary Being. He cannot not exist. Neither can God change, since he has no potentiality to be anything other than what he is. Likewise,

God is eternal, since time implies a change from a before to an after. But as the “I Am,” God has no before and afters. God also is simple (indivisible) since he has no potential for division. And he is infinite, since Pure Act as such is unlimited, having no potentiality to limit it.¹⁶ Besides these metaphysical attributes, God is also morally perfect and infinitely wise.¹⁷

ANALOGY

Natural knowledge of God is derived from his creation, as an efficient cause is known from its effects. Since God made the world, his creation resembles him. It is not the same as him (univocal), but it is like him. Our natural knowledge of God is based on that resemblance or analogy. Neither can it be totally different from him (equivocal), since the cause communicates something of itself to its effects.

Univocal (totally the same) knowledge of God is impossible, since our knowledge is limited and God is unlimited. Equivocal (totally different) knowledge of God is impossible, since creation resembles the Creator; the effect resembles its efficient cause. Of course, there are great differences between God and creatures. Hence, the *via negativa* (the way of negation) is necessary. That is, we must negate all limitations from our concepts before we apply them to God. We must apply to God only the perfection signified (goodness, truth, etc.), but not the finite mode of signification. So the same attribute will have the same definition for creatures and Creator but a different application or extension. The reason for this is that creatures are only finitely good while God is infinitely Good. So before we can appropriately apply the term “good” to God, we must negate the finite mode (how) in which we find good among creatures and apply the meaning (what) to God in an unlimited way.¹⁸

CREATION

God did not create the world out of himself (*ex Deo*) or out of preexisting matter (*ex materia*). Rather, he created it out of nothing (*ex nihilo*). Although an eternal creation is theoretically possible (since there is no logical reason an eternal cause cannot be causing eternally), nevertheless, divine revelation teaches that the universe had a beginning. So God created a temporal universe. There was literally no time before God created— only

eternity. God did not create *in* time; rather, with the world there was the creation *of* time. So there was no time before time began.¹⁹

Further, the universe is dependent on God for its existence. He not only caused it to come to be, but he also causes it to continue to be. God is both the Cause of the origination of the whole of creation and the Cause of its continuation. The universe is absolutely dependent on God; it is contingent. Only God is necessary.

HUMAN BEINGS

A human being is a matter-form unity of soul and body. Despite this unity, there is no identity between soul and body. The soul survives death and awaits reunion with the physical body at the final resurrection? The human soul is the formal cause while the body is the material cause of a human being. God, of course, is the efficient cause. Parents are only the instrumental cause of the body. The final cause (purpose) is to glorify God, who created us. Adam was directly created by God at the beginning, and God directly creates each new soul in the womb of its mother.²¹

ETHICS

Just as there are first principles of thought, so there are first principles of action, called laws. Aquinas distinguishes four kinds of law. Eternal law is the plan by which God governs creation. Natural law is the participation of rational creatures in this eternal law. Human law is a particular application of natural law to local communities. Divine law is the revelation of God's law through Scripture to believers.²²

Aquinas divides virtues into two classes: natural and supernatural. The former include prudence, justice, courage, and temperance. These are revealed through natural revelation and are applicable to all human beings. Supernatural virtues consist of faith, hope, and love. They are known from supernatural revelation in Scripture and are binding on believers.²³

WORKS ON AQUINAS

There are many helpful tools for studying Aquinas. Some of the more important reference works include the following:

Busa, Roberto. *Index Thomisticus*. This is a concordance of the writings of Aquinas, published by the Jesuite scholasticate in Gallarate, North Italy.

Deferrari, R. J. *A Complete Index of the Summa Theologiae of St. Thomas Aquinas*. Catholic University of America Press, 1956.

— Latin-English Dictionary of Thomas Aquinas. Daughters of St. Paul, 1960.

— A Lexicon of St. Thomas Aquinas Based on Summa Theologiae and Select Passages of His Other Work. Catholic University of America Press, 1960.

McKeon, Richard, ed. *Selections from Medieval Philosophers*. Vol. 2. Contains a Latin dictionary of key terms.

Mandonnet, P., and J. Destrez. *Bibliographie Thomiste*. Paris, 1921.

Miethe, Terry, and Vernon Bourke. *Thomistic Bibliography*. Greenwood, 1980.

Repertoire bibliographique, published under various titles by Louvain, 1895-1963.

Stockhammer, Morris. *Thomas Aquinas Dictionary*. Philosophical Library, 1965.

There are several journals that feature or contain articles on Aquinas:

The Aquinas Papers, Blackfriars, London.

Modern Schoolman, St. Louis University.

New Scholasticism, American Catholic Philosophical Association.

Proceedings of Jesuit Society (fewer articles on Aquinas since Vatican II). *Speculum* (a journal of medieval studies).

Thomist (published by the Dominican Fathers).

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER 1

- ¹. Os Guinness, *The Dust of Death* (Chicago: Inter-Varsity, 1973), p. 36; Francis Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There* (Chicago: Inter-Varsity, 1968), p. 61.
- ². Gordon Clark, "Special Divine Revelation as Rational," in *Revelation and the Bible*, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958), p. 32.
- ³. Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1955), pp. 73, 94, 127.
- ⁴. Cornelius Van Til, *The Great Debate Today* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1970), p. 91.
- ⁵. Gordon Clark, *A Christian View of Men and Things* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), p. 309.
- ⁶. Gordon Clark, *Religion, Reason, and Revelation* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1961), p. 35.
- ⁷. Clark, "Special Divine Revelation as Rational," p. 32.
- ⁸. E. J. Carnell, *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), pp. 132, 147, 150.
- ⁹. Carl F. H. Henry, *Remaking the Modern Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1946), pp. 197, 198, 201, 283.
- ¹⁰. Arthur Holmes, *Christianity and Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), pp. 25, 10, 33, 11.

- ¹¹. Arthur Holmes, *Faith Seeks Understanding* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), p. 141. “Our principal objection would be that it is too Grecian, and as such is too heavy on the reason aspect in things. Too much of the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle is baptized into Christianity.” Further, “this system is to be objected to because it does not take revelation as the indispensable starting place, and therefore leaves truth to the mercy of a clever philosopher” (Bernard Ramm, *Problems in Christian Apologetics* [Portland, Oreg.: Western Baptist Theological Seminary, 1949], pp. 22-23).
- ¹². Ronald Nash, “Thomas Aquinas—An Evangelical Appraisal,” *Christianity Today* (Mar. 1, 1974): 12.
- ¹³. The most popular apologist of our day whose arguments are deeply indebted to Aquinas is C. S. Lewis. This is obvious in *Mere Christianity*, *Miracles*, and *The Problem of Pain*.
- ¹⁴. See Carnell, *Introduction to Christian Apologetics*, pp. 148f.; Clark, *Christian View of Men and Things*, pp. 309ff.
- ¹⁵. See Norman L. Geisler and Winfried Corduan, *Philosophy of Religion* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), pt. 3, for a defense of this point.
- ¹⁶. George Klubertanz, *St. Thomas on Analogy* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1960); Battista Mondin, *The Principle of Analogy in Protestant and Catholic Theology* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963); Ralph McInerny, *The Logic of Analogy* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961).
- ¹⁷. Even Gordon Clark, despite his defense of “literal” God-talk, would fall short of this kind of Platonic dogmatism. See his *Religion, Reason, and Revelation*, pp. 142f.
- ¹⁸. *The Resurrection of Theism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1957).
- ¹⁹. *Ibid.*, pp. 117ff.
- ²⁰. *De veritate*, X, 6, ad 6; *Metaphysics*, IV, lect. 2 (476b); *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, 7; III, 47; *Summa theologiae*, 1a2ae. 51, 1; 1a, 103, 8; 80, 1, ad 3; 77, 3; 78, 1, ad 3; 105, 3; 1a2ae. 5, 4, ad 3; 1a, 79, 12.
- ²¹. Etienne Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1965), p. 308.
- ²². *Summa theologiae*, 1a. 80, 1, ad 3; cf. 77, 3; 78, 1, ad 3.

- ²³. Cornelius Van Til, "The Total Picture," *Synapse* H I (Jan. 1972): 1. Gilbert B. Weaver attempts to distinguish Van Til's view of analogy from that of Aquinas. But he misunderstands Aquinas on at least three points. Weaver wrongly assumes: (1) that Aquinas held that "man may know some things about himself and the world whether God exists or not"; (2) "that all creatures below God are involved to some extent in non-being as well as being"; and (3) that only Van Til holds that "analogy applies not to terms, but to the overall process of human thought [about God]." The fact is that these things Weaver thinks are distinctive about Van Til in contrast to Aquinas are precisely what Aquinas held. See "Man: Analogue of God," in *Jerusalem and Athens*, ed. E. R. Geehan (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1971), pp. 326-27.
- ²⁴. *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, 7; III, 47; *Summa theologiae*, 1a. 105, 3.
- ²⁵. *Ibid.*, 1a. 2, 3.
- ²⁶. God is the source of all truth. See n. 19 above and *Summa theologiae*, 1a. 16. 1-8; 1a2ae. 109, 1.
- ²⁷. *De veritate*, XIV, 8-9; cf. *Summa theologiae*, 2a2ae. 2, 10; *De Trinitate*, II, 1, ad 5; *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, 6.
- ²⁸. *Summa theologiae*, 1a2ae. 77, 4; 83, 3; 84, 2; cf. 1a2ae. 109, 1-10.
- ²⁹. *De veritate*, XIV, 9; *Summa theologiae*, 2a2ae. 1, 5; cf. *De veritate*, XIV, 5, 6.
- ³⁰. *Summa theologiae*, 1a. 2, 3.
- ³¹. *Ibid.*, 1a. 2, 3; 1a. 11, 3.
- ³². Van Til, *Defense of the Faith*, p. 126.
- ³³. *De veritate*, XIV, 8, 9; XIV, 1, ad 2; cf. *Summa theologiae*, 2a2ae. 2, 10.
- ³⁴. *Summa theologiae*, 1a. 2, 3; cf. *De Trinitate*, II, 1, ad 5; *De veritate*, XIV, 1, 9; *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, 6.
- ³⁵. See Geisler, *Philosophy of Religion*.
- ³⁶. See H. E. Owen, *Concepts of Deity* (London: Herder and Herder, 1971); *Summa theologiae*, 1a. 8-11, 14, 19.

CHAPTER 2

- ¹. My biographical approach follows that of the Roman Catholic pontifical scholars from whom I took courses at a Jesuit institution, the University of Detroit. They thoroughly discredited the religiously embellished, mythological versions of the life of Aquinas.
- ². James Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas D'Aquino: His Life, Thought, and Works* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1983), p. 9.
- ³. Ibid., p. 4.
- ⁴. M.-D. Chenu, *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1964), p. 11.
- ⁵. Kenelm Foster, *The Life of Saint Thomas Aquinas* (Baltimore: Helicon, 1959), p. 159.
- ⁶. Chenu, *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas*, p. 11.
- ⁷. Foster, *Life of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, p. 159.
- ⁸. Ibid.
- ⁹. Ibid.
- ¹⁰. Ibid.
- ¹¹. Ibid.
- ¹². Ibid., p. 34.
- ¹³. Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas D'Aquino*, p. 4.
- ¹⁴. Ibid.
- ¹⁵. Father Angelus Walz, *Saint Thomas Aquinas* (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1951), p. 5.
- ¹⁶. Ibid., p. 12.
- ¹⁷. Ibid., p. 13.
- ¹⁸. Ibid., p. 19.
- ¹⁹. Chenu, *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas*, p. 81.
- ²⁰. Foster, *Life of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, p. 27.
- ²¹. Chenu, *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas*, p. 12.

- ²².Ibid., p. 39.
- ²³.Foster, Life of Saint Thomas Aquinas, p. 30.
- ²⁴.Ibid., p. 28.
- ²⁵.Walz, Saint Thomas Aquinas, p. 37.
- ²⁶.Foster, Life of Saint Thomas Aquinas, p. 30.
- ²⁷.Chenu, Toward Understanding Saint Thomas, p. 24.
- ²⁸.Walz, Saint Thomas Aquinas, p. 57.
- ²⁹.Foster, Life of Saint Thomas Aquinas, p. 26.
- ³⁰.Ibid., p. 33.
- ³¹.Walz, Saint Thomas Aquinas, p. 62.
- ³².Chenu, Toward Understanding Saint Thomas, p. 12.
- ³³.Walz, Saint Thomas Aquinas, p. 62.
- ³⁴.Ibid., p. 69.
- ³⁵. Chenu, Toward Understanding Saint Thomas, p. 192.
- ³⁶. The verse reads: “This is the book of the commandments of God, and the law, that is forever” (Holy Bible, Douay Version, 1609).
- ³⁷. Chenu, Toward Understanding Saint Thomas, pp. 21-22.
- ³⁸. Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas D’Aquino*, p. 322.
- ³⁹. Ibid., p. 323.
- ⁴⁰. Ibid., pp. 320-21.
- ⁴¹. Ibid.
- ⁴². Weisheipl (ibid., pp. 336-37) lists some sixteen “Thomistic” propositions that were condemned in 1277. Many of them deal with his unique idea that form is differentiated by matter.
- ⁴³. Ibid., pp. 358-403.
- ⁴⁴. Ibid., pp. 403-5.

CHAPTER 3

¹. *Summa theologiae*, 2a2ae. 173, 3, ad 1.

- ². Ibid., 1a. 1, 2, ad 2.
- ³. Ibid., 1a. 1, 10, ad 3.
- ⁴. Ibid., 2a2ae. 1, 9.
- ⁵. De veritate, 10 & 2.
- ⁶. Summa theologiae, 2a2ae. 2, 4.
- ⁷. Summa contra Gentiles, 1, 4, 3-5.
- ⁸. Summa theologiae, 2a2ae. 2, 10.
- ⁹. Ibid., 1a. 2, 3.
- ¹⁰. Summa contra Gentiles, I, 3, 2.
- ¹¹. *De anima*, III, 4.
- ¹². *Summa theologiae*, 1a2ae. 17, 7.
- ¹³. Ibid., 1a. 17, 3, ad 2.
- ¹⁴. The modern concept of mathematics is much broader, and includes more abstract and nonquantifiable dimensions. Aquinas would have considered this philosophy, not mathematics.
- ¹⁵. On Being and Essence.
- ¹⁶. *Summa theologiae*, 1a. 3; 1a. 7-11.
- ¹⁷. Ibid., 1a. 4 & 5.
- ¹⁸. Ibid., 1a. 13; *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, 29-34.
- ¹⁹. *Summa theologiae*, 1a. 44-46.
- ²⁰. Ibid., 1a. 75-76.
- ²¹. Ibid., 1a. 90-93.
- ²². Ibid., 1a2ae. 91.
- ²³. Ibid., 1a. 60-61.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

Philosopher, theologian, doctor of the Church (Angelicus Doctor), patron of Catholic universities, colleges, and schools. Born at Rocca Secca in the Kingdom of Naples, 1225 or 1227; died at Fossa Nuova, 7 March, 1274.

I. LIFE

The great outlines and all the important events of his life are known, but biographers differ as to some details and dates. Death prevented Henry Denifle from executing his project of writing a critical life of the saint. Denifle's friend and pupil, Dominic Prümmer, O.P., professor of theology in the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, took up the work and published the "Fontes Vitae S. Thomae Aquinatis, notis historicis et criticis illustrati"; and the first fascicle (Toulouse, 1911) has appeared, giving the life of St. Thomas by Peter Calo (1300) now published for the first time. From Tolomeo of Lucca . . . we learn that at the time of the saint's death there was a doubt about his exact age (Prümmer, op. cit., 45). The end of 1225 is usually assigned as the time of his birth. Father Prümmer, on the authority of Calo, thinks 1227 is the more probable date (op. cit., 28). All agree that he died in 1274.

Landulph, his father, was Count of Aquino, Theodora, his mother, Countess of Teano. His family was related to the Emperors Henry VI and Frederick II, and to the Kings of Aragon, Castile, and France. Calo relates that a holy hermit foretold his career, saying to Theodora before his birth: "He will enter the Order of Friars Preachers, and so great will be his learning and sanctity that in his day no one will be found to equal him" (Prümmer, op. cit., 18). At the age of five, according to the custom of the times, he was sent to receive his first training from the Benedictine monks of Monte Cassino. Diligent in study, he was thus early noted as being meditative and devoted to prayer, and his preceptor was surprised at hearing the child ask frequently: "What is God?" About the year 1236 he was sent to the University of Naples. Calo says that the change was made

at the instance of the Abbot of Monte Cassino, who wrote to Thomas's father that a boy of such talents should not be left in obscurity (Prümmer, op. cit., 20). At Naples his preceptors were Pietro Martini and Petrus Hibernus. The chronicler says that he soon surpassed Martini a grammar, and he was then given over to Peter of Ireland, who trained him in logic and the natural sciences. The customs of the times divided the liberal arts into two courses: the Trivium, embracing grammar, logic, and rhetoric; the Quadrivium, comprising music, mathematics, geometry, and astronomy . . . Thomas could repeat the lessons with more depth and lucidity than his masters displayed. The youth's heart had remained pure amidst the corruption with which he was surrounded, and he resolved to embrace the religious life.

Some time between 1240 and August, 1243, he received the habit of the Order of St. Dominic, being attracted and directed by John of St. Julian, a noted preacher of the convent of Naples. The city wondered that such a noble young man should don the garb of poor friar. His mother, with mingled feelings of joy and sorrow, hastened to Naples to see her son. The Dominicans, fearing she would take him away, sent him to Rome, his ultimate destination being Paris or Cologne. At the instance of Theodora, Thomas's brothers, who were soldiers under the Emperor Frederick, captured the novice near the town of Aquapendente and confined him in the fortress of San Giovanni at Rocca Secca. Here he was detained nearly two years, his parents, brothers, and sisters endeavouring by various means to destroy his vocation. The brothers even laid snares for his virtue, but the pure-minded novice drove the temptress from his room with a brand which he snatched from the fire. Towards the end of his life, St. Thomas confided to his faithful friend and companion, Reginald of Piperno, the secret of a remarkable favour received at this time. When the temptress had been driven from his chamber, he knelt and most earnestly implored God to grant him integrity of mind and body. He fell into a gentle sleep, and, as he slept, two angels appeared to assure him that his prayer had been heard. They then girded him about with a white girdle, saying: "We gird thee with the girdle of perpetual virginity." And from that day forward he never experienced the slightest motions of concupiscence.

The time spent in captivity was not lost. His mother relented somewhat, after the first burst of anger and grief; the Dominicans were allowed to

provide him with new habits, and through the kind offices of his sister he procured some books – the Holy Scriptures, Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, and the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. After eighteen months or two years spent in prison, either because his mother saw that the hermit’s prophecy would eventually be fulfilled or because his brothers feared the threats of Innocent IV and Frederick II, he was set at liberty, being lowered in a basket into the arms of the Dominicans, who were delighted to find that during his captivity “he had made as much progress as if he had been in a *studium generale*” (Calo, op. cit., 24). Thomas immediately pronounced his vows, and his superiors sent him to Rome. Innocent IV examined closely into his motives in joining the Friars Preachers, dismissed him with a blessing, and forbade any further interference with his vocation. John the Teutonic, fourth master general of the order, took the young student to Paris and, according to the majority of the saint’s biographers, to Cologne, where he arrived in 1244 or 1245, and was placed under Albertus Magnus, the most renowned professor of the order. In the schools Thomas’s humility and taciturnity were misinterpreted as signs of dullness, but when Albert had heard his brilliant defence of a difficult thesis, he exclaimed: “We call this young man a dumb ox, hut his bellowing in doctrine will one day resound throughout the world.”

In 1245 Albert was sent to Paris, and Thomas accompanied him as a student. In 1248 both returned to Cologne. Albert had been appointed regent of the new *studium generale*, erected that year by the general chapter of the order, and Thomas was to teach under him as Bachelor. (On the system of graduation in the thirteenth century, see *PREACHERS, ORDER OF* – II, A, 1, d). During his stay in Cologne, probably in 1250, he was raised to the priesthood by Conrad of Hochstaden, archbishop of that city. Throughout his busy life, he frequently preached the Word of God, in Germany, France, and Italy. His sermons were forceful, redolent of piety, full of solid instruction, abounding in apt citations from the Scriptures. In the year 1251 or 1252 the master general of the order, by the advice of Albertus Magnus and Hugo a S. Charo (Hugh of St. Cher), sent Thomas to fill the office of Bachelor (sub-regent) in the Dominican *studium* at Paris. This appointment may be regarded as the beginning of his public career, for his teaching soon attracted the attention both of the professors and of the students. His duties consisted principally in

explaining the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, and his commentaries on that text-book of theology furnished the materials and, in great part, the plan for his chief work, the *Summa Theologica*.

In due time he was ordered to prepare himself to obtain the degree of Doctor in Theology from the University of Paris, but the conferring of the degree was postponed, owing to a dispute between the university and the friars. The conflict, originally a dispute between the university and the civic authorities, arose from the slaying of one of the students and the wounding of three others by the city guard. The university, jealous of its autonomy, demanded satisfaction, which was refused. The doctors closed their schools, solemnly swore that they would not reopen them until their demands were granted, and decreed that in future no one should be admitted to the degree of Doctor unless he would take an oath to follow the same line of conduct under similar circumstances. The Dominicans and Franciscans, who had continued to teach in their schools, refused to take the prescribed oath, and from this there arose a bitter conflict which was at its height when St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure were ready to be presented for their degrees. William of St-Amour extended the dispute beyond the original question, violently attacked the Friars, of whom he was evidently jealous, and denied their right to occupy chairs in the university. Against his book, *De periculis novissimorum temporum* (The Perils of the Last Times), St. Thomas wrote a treatise *Contra impugnantes religionem*, an apology for the religious orders (Touren, op. cit., II, cc. vii sqq.). The book of William of St-Amour was condemned by Alexander IV at Anagni, 5 October, 1256, and the pope gave orders that the mendicant friars should be admitted to the doctorate.

About this time St. Thomas also combated a dangerous book, *The Eternal Gospel* (Touren, op. cit., II, cxii). The university authorities did not obey immediately; the influence of St. Louis IX and eleven papal Briefs were required before peace was firmly established, and St. Thomas was admitted to the degree of Doctor in Theology. The date of his promotion, as given by many biographers, was 23 October, 1257. His theme was "The Majesty of Christ". His text, "Thou waterest the hills from thy upper rooms: the earth shall be filled with the fruit of thy works" (Psalm 103:13), said to have been suggested by a heavenly visitor, seems to have been prophetic of his career. A tradition says that St. Bonaventure and St.

Thomas received the doctorate on the same day, and that there was a contest of humility between the two friends as to which should be promoted first. From this time St. Thomas's life may be summed up in a few words: praying, preaching, teaching, writing, journeying. Men were more anxious to hear him than they had been to hear Albert, whom St. Thomas surpassed in accuracy, lucidity, brevity, and power of exposition, if not in universality of knowledge. Paris claimed him as her own; the popes wished to have him near them; the studia of the order were eager to enjoy the benefit of his teaching; hence we find him successively at Anagni, Rome, Bologna, Orvieto, Viterbo, Perugia, in Paris again, and finally in Naples, always teaching and writing, living on earth with one passion, an ardent zeal for the explanation and defence of Christian truth. So devoted was he to his sacred task that with tears he begged to be excused from accepting the Archbishopric of Naples, to which he was appointed by Clement IV in 1265. Had this appointment been accepted, most probably the *Summa Theologica* would not have been written.

Yielding to the requests of his brethren, he on several occasions took part in the deliberations of the general chapters of the order. One of these chapters was held in London in 1263. In another held at Valenciennes (1259) he collaborated with Albertus Magnus and Peter of Tarentasia (afterwards Pope Innocent V) in formulating a system of studies which is substantially preserved to this day in the studia generalia of the Dominican Order (cf. Douais, op. cit.). It is not surprising to read in the biographies of St. Thomas that he was frequently abstracted and in ecstasy. Towards the end of his life the ecstasies became more frequent. On one occasion, at Naples in 1273, after he had completed his treatise on the Eucharist, three of the brethren saw him lifted in ecstasy, and they heard a voice proceeding from the crucifix on the altar, saying "Thou hast written well of me, Thomas; what reward wilt thou have?". Thomas replied, "None other than Thyself, Lord" (Prümmer, op. cit., p. 38). Similar declarations are said to have been made at Orvieto and at Paris. On 6 December, 1273, he laid aside his pen and would write no more. That day he experienced an unusually long ecstasy during Mass; what was revealed to him we can only surmise from his reply to Father Reginald, who urged him to continue his writings: "I can do no more. Such secrets have been revealed to me that

all I have written now appears to be of little value” (modica, Prümmer, op. cit., p. 43).

The *Summa Theologica* had been completed only as far as the ninetieth question of the third part (De partibus poenitentiae). Thomas began his immediate preparation for death. Gregory X, having convoked a general council, to open at Lyons on 1 May, 1274, invited St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure to take part in the deliberations, commanding the former to bring to the council his treatise *Contra errores Graecorum* (Against the Errors of the Greeks). He tried to obey, setting out on foot in January, 1274, but strength failed him; he fell to the ground near Terracina, whence he was conducted to the Castle of Maienza the home of his niece the Countess Francesca Ceccano. The Cistercian monks of Fossa Nuova pressed him to accept their hospitality, and he was conveyed to their monastery, on entering which he whispered to his companion: “This is my rest for ever and ever: here will I dwell, for I have chosen it” (Psalm 131:14). When Father Reginald urged him to remain at the castle, the saint replied: “If the Lord wishes to take me away, it is better that I be found in a religious house than in the dwelling of a lay person.” The Cistercians were so kind and attentive that Thomas’s humility was alarmed. “Whence comes this honour”, he exclaimed, “that servants of God should carry wood for my fire!” At the urgent request of the monks he dictated a brief commentary on the Canticle of Canticles.

The end was near; extreme unction was administered. When the Sacred Viaticum was brought into the room he pronounced the following act of faith:

If in this world there be any knowledge of this sacrament stronger than that of faith, I wish now to use it in affirming that I firmly believe and know as certain that Jesus Christ, True God and True Man, Son of God and Son of the Virgin Mary, is in this Sacrament . . . I receive Thee, the price of my redemption, for Whose love I have watched, studied, and laboured. Thee have I preached; Thee have I taught. Never have I said anything against Thee: if anything was not well said, that is to be attributed to my ignorance. Neither do I wish to be obstinate in my opinions, but if I have written anything erroneous concerning this

sacrament or other matters, I submit all to the judgment and correction of the Holy Roman Church, in whose obedience I now pass from this life.

He died on 7 March, 1274. Numerous miracles attested his sanctity, and he was canonized by John XXII, 18 July, 1323. The monks of Fossa Nuova were anxious to keep his sacred remains, but by order of Urban V the body was given to his Dominican brethren, and was solemnly translated to the Dominican church at Toulouse, 28 January, 1369. A magnificent shrine erected in 1628 was destroyed during the French Revolution, and the body was removed to the Church of St. Sernin, where it now reposes in a sarcophagus of gold and silver, which was solemnly blessed by Cardinal Desprez on 24 July, 1878. The chief bone of his left arm is preserved in the cathedral of Naples. The right arm, bestowed on the University of Paris, and originally kept in the St. Thomas's Chapel of the Dominican church, is now preserved in the Dominican Church of S. Maria Sopra Minerva in Rome, whither it was transferred during the French Revolution.

A description of the saint as he appeared in life is given by Calo (Prümmer, op. cit., p. 401), who says that his features corresponded with the greatness of his soul. He was of lofty stature and of heavy build, but straight and well proportioned. His complexion was "like the colour of new wheat": his head was large and well shaped, and he was slightly bald. All portraits represent him as noble, meditative, gentle yet strong. St. Pius V proclaimed St. Thomas a Doctor of the Universal Church in the year 1567. In the Encyclical *Aeterni Patris*, of 4 August, 1879, on the restoration of Christian philosophy, Leo XIII declared him "the prince and master of all Scholastic doctors". The same illustrious pontiff, by a Brief dated 4 August, 1880, designated him patron of all Catholic universities, academies, colleges, and schools throughout the world.

II. WRITINGS

A. General Remarks

Although St. Thomas lived less than fifty years, he composed more than sixty works, some of them brief, some very lengthy. This does not necessarily mean that every word in the authentic works was written by his hand; he was assisted by secretaries, and biographers assure us that he

could dictate to several scribes at the same time. Other works, some of which were composed by his disciples, have been falsely attributed to him. In the *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum* (Paris 1719) Fr. Echard devotes eighty-six folio pages to St. Thomas's works, the different editions and translations (I, pp. 282-348). Tournon (op. cit., pp. 69 sqq.) says that manuscript copies were found in nearly all the libraries of Europe, and that, after the invention of printing, copies were multiplied rapidly in Germany, Italy, and France, portions of the *Summa Theologica* being one of the first important works printed. Peter Schoeffer, a printer of Mainz, published the *Secunda Secundae* in 1467. This is the first known printed copy of any work of St. Thomas. The first complete edition of the *Summa* was printed at Basle, in 1485. Many other editions of this and of other works were published in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, especially at Venice and at Lyons. The principal editions of all the work (*Opera Omnia*) were published as follows: Rome, 1570; Venice, 1594, 1612, 1745; Antwerp, 1612; Paris, 1660, 1871-80 (Vives); Parma, 1852-73; Rome, 1882 (the Leonine). The Roman edition of 1570, called *the Piana*, because edited by order of St. Pius V, was the standard for many years. Besides a carefully revised text it contained the commentaries of Cardinal Cajetan and the valuable *Tabula Aurea* of Peter of Bergamo. The Venetian edition of 1612 was highly prized because the text was accompanied by the Cajetan-Porrecta commentaries . . . The Leonine edition, begun under the patronage of Leo XIII, now continued under the master general of the Dominicans, undoubtedly will be the most perfect of all. Critical dissertations on each work will be given, the text will be carefully revised, and all references will be verified. By direction of Leo XIII (Motu Proprio, 18 Jan., 1880) the *Summa Contra Gentiles* will be published with the commentaries of Sylvester Ferrariensis, whilst the commentaries of Cajetan go with the *Summa Theologica*.

The latter has been published, being vols. IV-XII of the edition (last in 1906). St. Thomas's works may be classified as philosophical, theological, scriptural, and apologetic, or controversial. The division, however, cannot always be rigidly maintained. The *Summa Theologica*, e.g., contains much that is philosophical, whilst the *Summa Contra Gentiles* is principally, but not exclusively, philosophical and apologetic. His philosophical works are chiefly commentaries on Aristotle, and his first important theological

writings were commentaries on Peter Lombard's four books of *Sentences*; but he does not slavishly follow either the Philosopher or the Master of the Sentences (on opinions of the Lombard rejected by theologians, see Migne, 1841, edition of the *Summa* I, p. 451).

B. His Principal Works in Detail

Amongst the works wherein St. Thomas's own mind and method are shown, the following deserve special mention:

(1) *Quaestiones disputatae* (Disputed Questions) – These were more complete treatises on subjects that had not been fully elucidated in the lecture halls, or concerning which the professor's opinion had been sought. They are very valuable, because in them the author, free from limitations as to time or space, freely expresses his mind and gives all arguments for or against the opinions adopted. These treatises, containing the questions *De potentia*, *De malo*, *De spirit. creaturis*, *De anima*, *De unione Verbi Incarnati*, *De virt. in communi*, *De caritate*, *De corr. fraterna*, *De spe*, *De virt. cardinal.*, *De veritate*, were often reprinted, e.g. recently by the Association of St. Paul (2 vols., Paris and Fribourg, Switzerland, 1883).

(2) *Quodlibeta* (may be rendered "Various Subjects", or "Free Discussions") – They present questions or arguments proposed and answers given in or outside the lecture halls, chiefly in the more formal scholastic exercises, termed *circuli*, *conclusiones*, or *determinationes*, which were held once or twice a year.

(3) *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas* – This opusculum refuted a very dangerous and widespread error, viz., that there was but one soul for all men, a theory which did away with individual liberty and responsibility. (See AVERROES)

(4) *Commentaria in Libros Sententiarum* (mentioned above) – This with the following work are the immediate forerunners of the *Summa Theologica*.

(5) *Summa de veritate catholicae fidei contra gentiles* (Treatise on the Truth of the Catholic Faith, against Unbelievers) – This work, written at Rome, 1261-64, was composed at the request of St. Raymond of

Pennafort, who desired to have a philosophical exposition and defence of the Christian Faith, to be used against the Jews and Moors in Spain. It is a perfect model of patient and sound apologetics, showing that no demonstrated truth (science) is opposed to revealed truth (faith). The best recent editions are those of Rome, 1878 (by Uccelli), of Paris and Fribourg, Switzerland, 1882, and of Rome, 1894. It has been translated into many languages. It is divided into four books: I. Of God as He is in Himself; II. Of God the Origin of Creatures; III. Of God the End of Creatures; IV. Of God in His Revelation. It is worthy of remark that the Fathers of the Vatican Council, treating the necessity of revelation (Coast. *Dei Filius*, c. 2), employed almost the very words used by St. Thomas in treating that subject in this work (I, cc. iv, V), and in the *Summa Theologica* (I, Q. i, a. 1).

(6) Three works written by order of Urban IV –

The *Opusculum contra errores Graecorum* refuted the errors of the Greeks on doctrines in dispute between them and the Roman Church, viz., the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son, the primacy of the Roman pontiff, the Holy Eucharist, and purgatory. It was used against the Greeks with telling effect in the Council of Lyons (1274) and in the Council of Florence (1493). In the range of human reasonings on deep subjects there can be found nothing to surpass the sublimity and depth of the argument adduced by St. Thomas to prove that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son (cf. *Summa theol.*, I, Q. xxxvi, a. 2); but it must be borne in mind that our Faith is not based on that argument alone.

Officium de festo Corporis Christi. Mandonnet (Ecrits, p. 127) declares that it is now established beyond doubt that St. Thomas is the author of the beautiful Office of Corpus Christi, in which solid doctrine, tender piety, and enlightening Scriptural citations are combined, and expressed in language remarkably accurate, beautiful, chaste, and poetic. Here we find the well-known hymns, *Sacris Solemniis*, *Pange Lingua* (concluding in the *Tantum Ergo*), *Verbum Super num* (concluding with the O Salutaris Hostia”) and, in the Mass, the beautiful sequence *Lauda Sion*. In the responses of the office, St. Thomas places side by side words of the New Testament affirming the real presence of Christ in the

Blessed Sacrament and texts from the Old Testament referring to the types and figures of the Eucharist. Santeuil, a poet of the seventeenth century, said he would give all the verses he had written for the one stanza of the *Verbum Supernum*: “Se nascens dedit socium, convescens in edulium: Se moriens in pretium, Se regnans dat in praemium” “In birth, man’s fellow-man was He, His meat, while sitting at the Board: He died his Ransomer to be, He reigns to be his Great Reward” (tr. by Marquis of Bute). Perhaps the gem of the whole office is the antiphon “O Sacrum Convivium” (cf. Conway, *St. Thomas Aquinas*, London and New York, 1911, p. 61).

The *Catena Aurea* though not as original as his other writings, furnishes a striking proof of St. Thomas’s prodigious memory and manifests an intimate acquaintance with the Fathers of the Church. The work contains a series of passages selected from the writings of the various Fathers, arranged in such order that the texts cited form a running commentary on the Gospels. The commentary on St. Matthew was dedicated to Urban IV. An English translation of the *Catena Aurea* was edited by John Henry Newman (4 vols., Oxford 1841-1845; see Vaughan, op. cit., vol.II,) pp. 529 sqq..

(7) The *Summa Theologica* – This work immortalized St. Thomas. The author himself modestly considered it simply a manual of Christian doctrine for the use of students. In reality it is a complete scientifically arranged exposition of theology and at the same time a summary of Christian philosophy . . . In the brief prologue St. Thomas first calls attention to the difficulties experienced by students of sacred doctrine in his day, the causes assigned being: the multiplication of useless questions, articles, and arguments; the lack of scientific order; frequent repetitions, “which beget disgust and confusion in the minds of learners”. Then he adds: “Wishing to avoid these and similar drawbacks, we shall endeavour, confiding in the Divine assistance, to treat of these things that pertain to sacred doctrine with brevity and clearness, in so far as the subject to be treated will permit.” In the introductory question, *On Sacred Doctrine*, he proves that, besides the knowledge which reason affords, Revelation also is necessary for salvation first, because without it men could not know the supernatural end to which they must tend by their voluntary acts; secondly, because, without

Revelation, even the truths concerning God which could be proved by reason would be known “only by a few, after a lot time, and with the admixture of many errors”. When revealed truths have been accepted, the mind of man proceeds to explain them and to draw conclusions from them. Hence results theology, which is a science, because it proceeds from principles that are certain (a. 2). The object, or subject, of this science is God; other things are treated in it only in so far as they relate to God (a. 7). Reason is used in theology not to prove the truths of faith, which are accepted on the authority of God, but to defend, explain, and develop the doctrines revealed (a. 8). He thus announces the division of the *Summa*: “Since the chief aim of this sacred science is to give the knowledge of God, not only as He is in Himself, but also as He is the Beginning of all things, and the End of all, especially of rational creatures, we shall treat first of God; secondly, of the rational creature’s advance towards God (de motu creaturae rationalis in Deum); thirdly, of Christ, Who, as Man, is the way by which we tend to God.” God in Himself, and as He is the Creator; God as the End of all things, especially of man; God as the Redeemer – these are the leading ideas, the great headings, under which all that pertains to theology is contained.

(a) Sub-divisions

The First Part is divided into three tracts: [alpha] On those things which pertain to the Essence of God; [beta] On the distinction of Persons in God (the mystery of the Trinity); [gamma] On the production of creatures by God and on the creatures produced.

The Second Part, On God as He is in the End of man, is sometimes called the Moral Theology of St. Thomas, i.e., his treatise on the end of man and on human acts. It is subdivided into two parts, known as the First Section of the Second (I-II, or 1a 2ae) and the Second of the Second (II-II, or 2a 2ae).

The First of the Second. The first five questions are devoted to proving that man’s last end, his beatitude, consists in the possession of God. Man attains to that end or deviates from it by human acts, i.e. by free, deliberate acts. Of human acts he treats, first, in general (in all but the first five questions of the I-II), secondly, in particular (in the whole

of the II-II). The treatise on human acts in general is divided into two parts: the first, on human acts in themselves; the other, on the principles or causes, extrinsic or intrinsic, of those acts. In these tracts and in the Second of the Second, St. Thomas, following Aristotle, gives a perfect description and a wonderfully keen analysis of the movements of man's mind and heart.

The Second of the Second considers human acts, i.e., the virtues and vices, in particular. In it St. Thomas treats, first, of those things that pertain to all men, no matter what may be their station in life, and, secondly, of those things that pertain to some men only. Things that pertain to all men are reduced to seven headings: Faith, Hope, and Charity; Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance. Under each title, in order to avoid repetitions, St. Thomas treats not only of the virtue itself, but also of the vices opposed to it, of the commandment to practise it, and of the gift of the Holy Ghost which corresponds to it. Things pertaining to some men only are reduced to three headings: the graces freely given (*gratia gratis datae*) to certain individuals for the good of the Church, such as the gifts of tongues, of prophecy, of miracles; the active and the contemplative life; the particular states of life, and duties of those who are in different states, especially bishops and religious.

The Third Part treats of Christ and of the benefits which He has conferred upon man, hence three tracts: On the Incarnation, and on what the Saviour did and suffered; On the Sacraments, which were instituted by Christ, and have their efficacy from His merits and sufferings; On Eternal Life, i.e., on the end of the world, the resurrection of bodies, judgment, the punishment of the wicked, the happiness of the just who, through Christ, attain to eternal life in heaven. Eight years were given to the composition of this work, which was begun at Rome, where the First Part and the First of the Second were written (1265-69). The Second of the Second, begun in Rome, was completed in Paris (1271). In 1272 St. Thomas went to Naples, where the Third Part was written, down to the ninetieth question of the tract On Penance (see Leonine edition, I, p. xlii). The work has been completed by the addition of a supplement, drawn from other writings of St. Thomas, attributed by some to Peter of Auvergne, by

others to Henry of Gorkum. These attributions are rejected by the editors of the Leonine edition (XI, pp. viii, xiv, xviii). Mandonnet (op. cit., 153) inclines to the very probable opinion that it was compiled by Father Reginald de Piperno, the saint's faithful companion and secretary. The entire *Summa* contains 38 Treatises, 612 Questions, subdivided into 3120 articles, in which about 10,000 objections are proposed and answered. So admirably is the promised order preserved that, by reference to the beginning of the Tracts and Questions, one can see at a glance what place it occupies in the general plan, which embraces all that can be known through theology of God, of man, and of their mutual relations . . . "The whole *Summa* is arranged on a uniform plan. Every subject is introduced as a question, and divided into articles. . . Each article has also a uniform disposition of parts. The topic is introduced as an inquiry for discussion, under the term *Utrum*, whether – e.g. *Utrum Deus sit?* The objections against the proposed thesis are then stated. These are generally three or four in number, but sometimes extend to seven or more. The conclusion adopted is then introduced by the words, *Respondeo dicendum*. At the end of the thesis expounded the objections are answered, under the forms, *ad primum*, *ad secundum*, etc." . . . The *Summa* is Christian doctrine in scientific form; it is human reason rendering its highest service in defence and explanation of the truths of the Christian religion. It is the answer of the matured and saintly doctor to the question of his youth: What is God? Revelation, made known in the Scriptures and by tradition; reason and its best results; soundness and fulness of doctrine, order, conciseness and clearness of expression, effacement of self, the love of truth alone, hence a remarkable fairness towards adversaries and calmness in combating their errors; soberness and soundness of judgment, together with a charmingly tender and enlightened piety – these are all found in this *Summa* more than in his other writings, more than in the writings of his contemporaries, for "among the scholastic doctors, the chief and master of all, towers Thomas Aquinas, who, as Cajetan observes (In 2am 2ae, Q. 148, a. 4) 'because he most venerated the ancient doctors of the Church in a certain way seems to have inherited the intellect of all'" (Encyclical, *Aeterni Patris*, of Leo XIII).

(b) Editions and Translations

It is impossible to mention the various editions of the *Summa*, which has been in constant use for more than seven hundred years. Very few books have been so often republished. The first complete edition, printed at Basle in 1485, was soon followed by others, e.g., at Venice in 1505, 1509, 1588, 1594; at Lyons in 1520, 1541, 1547, 1548, 1581, 1588, 1624, 1655; at Antwerp in 1575. These are enumerated by Touron (op. cit., p. 692), who says that about the same time other editions were published at Rome, Antwerp, Rouen, Paris, Douai, Cologne, Amsterdam, Bologna, etc. The editors of the Leonine edition deem worthy of mention those published at Paris in 1617, 1638, and 1648, at Lyons in 1663, 1677, and 1686, and a Roman edition of 1773 (IV, pp. xi, xii). Of all old editions they consider the most accurate two published at Padua, one in 1698, the other in 1712, and the Venice edition of 1755. Of recent editions the best are the – following: the Leonine; the Migne editions (Paris 1841, 1877); the first volume of the 1841 edition containing the *Libri quatuor sententiarum* of Peter Lombard; the very practical Faucher edition (5 vols. small quarto, Paris, 1887), dedicated to Cardinal Pecci, enriched with valuable notes; a Roman edition of 1894. The *Summa* has been translated into many modern languages as well.

C. Method and Style of St. Thomas

It is not possible to characterize the method of St. Thomas by one word, unless it can be called eclectic. It is Aristotelean, Platonic, and Socratic; it is inductive and deductive; it is analytic and synthetic. He chose the best that could be found in those who preceded him, carefully sifting the chaff from the wheat, approving what was true, rejecting the false. His powers of synthesis were extraordinary. No writer surpassed him in the faculty of expressing in a few well-chosen words the truth gathered from a multitude of varying and conflicting opinions; and in almost every instance the student sees, the truth and is perfectly satisfied with St. Thomas's summary and statement. Not that he would have students swear by the words of a master. In philosophy, he says, arguments from authority are of secondary importance; philosophy does not consist in knowing what men have said, but in knowing the truth (In I lib. de Coelo, lect. xxii; II

Sent., D. xiv, a. 2, ad lum). He assigns its proper place to reason used in theology (see below: Influence of St. Thomas), but he keeps it within its own sphere. Against the Traditionalists the Holy See has declared that the method used by St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure does not lead to Rationalism (Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 1652). Not so bold or original in investigating nature as were Albertus Magnus and Roger Bacon, he was, nevertheless, abreast of his time in science, and many of his opinions are of scientific value in the twentieth century. Take, for instance, the following: “In the same plant there is the two-fold virtue, active and passive, though sometimes the active is found in one and the passive in another, so that one plant is said to be masculine and the other feminine” (3 Sent., D. III, Q. ii, a 1).

The style of St. Thomas is a medium between the rough expressiveness of some Scholastics and the fastidious elegance of John of Salisbury; it is remarkable for accuracy, brevity, and completeness. Pope Innocent VI (quoted in the Encyclical, *Aeterni Patris*, of Leo XIII) declared that, with the exception of the canonical writings, the works of St. Thomas surpass all others in “accuracy of expression and truth of statement” (*habet proprietatem verborum, modum dicendorum, veritatem sententiarum*). Great orators, such as Bossuet, Lacordaire, Monsabre, have studied his style, and have been influenced by it, but they could not reproduce it. The same is true of theological writers. Cajetan knew St. Thomas’s style better than any of his disciples, but Cajetan is beneath his great master in clearness and accuracy of expression, in soberness and solidity of judgment. St. Thomas did not attain to this perfection without an effort. He was a singularly blessed genius, but he was also an indefatigable worker, and by continued application he reached that stage of perfection in the art of writing where the art disappears. “The author’s manuscript of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* is still in great part extant. It is now in the Vatican Library. The manuscript consists of strips of parchment, of various shades of colour, contained in an old parchment cover to which they were originally stitched. The writing is in double column, and difficult to decipher, abounding in abbreviations, often passing into a kind of shorthand. Throughout many passages a line is drawn in sign of erasure” (Rickaby, *Op. cit.*, preface: see Ucelli ed., *Sum. coat. gent.*, Rome, 1878).

III. INFLUENCES EXERTED ON ST. THOMAS

How was this great genius formed? The causes that exerted an influence on St. Thomas were of two kinds, natural and supernatural.

A. Natural Causes

(1) As a foundation, he “was a witty child, and had received a good soul” (Wis., viii, 19). From the beginning he manifested precocious and extraordinary talent and thoughtfulness beyond his years.

(2) His education was such that great things might have been expected of him. His training at Monte Cassino, at Naples, Paris, and Cologne was the best that the thirteenth century could give, and that century was the golden age of education. That it afforded excellent opportunities for forming great philosophers and theologians is evident from the character of St. Thomas’s contemporaries. Alexander of Hales, Albertus Magnus, St. Bonaventure, St. Raymond of Pennafort, Roger Bacon, Hugo a S. Charo, Vincent of Beauvais, not to mention scores of others, prove beyond all doubt that those were days of really great scholars. (See Walsh, “The Thirteenth Greatest of Centuries”, New York, 1907.) The men who trained St. Thomas were his teachers at Monte Cassino and Naples, but above all Albertus Magnus, under whom he studied at Paris and Cologne.

(3) The books that exercised the greatest influence on his mind were the Bible, the Decrees of the councils and of the popes, the works of the Fathers, Greek and Latin, especially of St. Augustine, the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, the writings of the philosophers, especially of Plato, Aristotle, and Boethius. If from these authors any were to be selected for special mention, undoubtedly they would be Aristotle, St. Augustine, and Peter Lombard. In another sense the writings of St. Thomas were influenced by Averroes, the chief opponent whom he had to combat in order to defend and make known the true Aristotle.

(4) It must be borne in mind that St. Thomas was blessed with a retentive memory and great powers of penetration. Father Daniel d’Agusta once pressed him to say what he considered the greatest grace he had ever received, sanctifying grace of course excepted. “I think that of having understood whatever I have read”, was the reply. St.

Antoninus declared that “he remembered everything he had read, so that his mind was like a huge library” (cf. Drane, *op. cit.*, p. 427; Vaughan, *op. cit.*, II, p. 567). The bare enumeration of the texts of Scripture cited in the *Summa Theologica* fills eighty small-print columns in the Migne edition, and by many it is not unreasonably supposed that he learned the Sacred Books by heart while he was imprisoned in the Castle of San Giovanni. Like St. Dominic he had a special love for the Epistles of St. Paul, on which he wrote commentaries (recent edition in 2 vols., Turin, 1891).

(5) Deep reverence for the Faith, as made known by tradition, characterizes all his writings. The *consuetudo ecclesiae* – the practice of the Church – should prevail over the authority of any doctor (II-II, Q. x. a. 12). In the *Summa* he quotes from 19 councils, 41 popes, and 52 Fathers of the Church. A slight acquaintance with his writings will show that among the Fathers his favourite was St. Augustine (on the Greek Fathers see Vaughan, *op. cit.*, II, cc. iii sqq.).

(6) With St. Augustine (II De doctr. Christ., c. xl), St. Thomas held that whatever there was of truth in the writings of pagan philosophers should be taken from them, as from “unjust possessors”, and adapted to the teaching of the true religion (Sum. theol., I, Q. lxxxiv, a. 5). In the *Summa* alone he quotes from the writings of 46 philosophers and poets, his favourite authors being Aristotle, Plato, and, among Christian writers, Boethius. From Aristotle he learned that love of order and accuracy of expression which are characteristic of his own works. From Boethius he learned that Aristotle’s works could be used without detriment to Christianity. He did not follow Boethius in his vain attempt to reconcile Plato and Aristotle. In general the Stagirite was his master, but the elevation and grandeur of St. Thomas’s conceptions and the majestic dignity of his methods of treatment speak strongly of the sublime Plato.

B. Supernatural Causes

Even if we do not accept as literally true the declaration of John XXII, that St. Thomas wrought as many miracles as there are articles in the *Summa*, we must, nevertheless, go beyond causes merely natural in attempting to explain his extraordinary career and wonderful writings.

(1) Purity of mind and body contributes in no small degree to clearness of vision (see St. Thomas, *Commentaries on I Cor.*, c.vii, Lesson v). By the gift of purity, miraculously granted at the time of the mystic girdling, God made Thomas's life angelic; the perspicacity and depth of his intellect, Divine grace aiding, made him the "Angelic Doctor".

(2) The spirit of prayer, his great piety and devotion, drew down blessings on his studies. Explaining why he read, every day, portions of the *Conferences* of Cassian, he said: "In such reading I find devotion, whence I readily ascend to contemplation" (Prümmer, op. cit., p. 32). In the lessons of the Breviary read on his feast day it is explicitly stated that he never began to study without first invoking the assistance of God in prayer; and when he wrestled with obscure passages of the Scriptures, to prayer he added fasting.

(3) Facts narrated by persons who either knew St. Thomas in life or wrote at about the time of his canonization prove that he received assistance from heaven. To Father Reginald he declared that he had learned more in prayer and contemplation than he had acquired from men or books (Prümmer, op. cit., p. 36). These same authors tell of mysterious visitors who came to encourage and enlighten him. The Blessed Virgin appeared, to assure him that his life and his writings were acceptable to God, and that he would persevere in his holy vocation. Sts. Peter and Paul came to aid him in interpreting an obscure passage in Isaias. When humility caused him to consider himself unworthy of the doctorate, a venerable religious of his order (supposed to be St. Dominic) appeared to encourage him and suggested the text for his opening discourse (Prümmer, op. cit., 29, 37; Tocco in *Acta SS.*, VII Mar.; Vaughan, op. cit., II, 91). His ecstasies have been mentioned. His abstractions in presence of King Louis IX (St. Louis) and of distinguished visitors are related by all biographers. Hence, even if allowance be made for great enthusiasm on the part of his admirers, we must conclude that his extraordinary learning cannot be attributed to merely natural causes. Of him it may truly be said that he laboured as if all depended on his own efforts and prayed as if all depended on God.

IV. INFLUENCE OF ST. THOMAS

A. Influence on Sanctity

The great Scholastics were holy as well as learned men. Alexander of Hales, St. Albertus Magnus, St. Thomas, and St. Bonaventure prove that learning does not necessarily dry up devotion. The angelic Thomas and the seraphic Bonaventure represent the highest types of Christian scholarship, combining eminent learning with heroic sanctity. Cardinal Bessarion called St. Thomas “the most saintly of learned men and the most learned of saints”. His works breathe the spirit of God, a tender and enlightened piety, built on a solid foundation, viz. the knowledge of God, of Christ, of man. The *Summa Theologica* may be made a manual of piety as well as a text-book for the study of theology (Cf. Drane, op. cit., p. 446). St. Francis de Sales, St. Philip Neri, St. Charles Borromeo, St. Vincent Ferrer, St. Pius V, St. Antoninus constantly studied St. Thomas. Nothing could be more inspiring than his treatises on Christ, in His sacred Person, in His life and sufferings. His treatise on the sacraments, especially on penance and the Eucharist, would melt even hardened hearts. He takes pains to explain the various ceremonies of the Mass (*De ritu Eucharistiae* in *Sum. theol.*, III, Q. lxxxiii, and no writer has explained more clearly than St. Thomas the effects produced in the souls of men by this heavenly Bread (*ibid.*, Q. lxxix). The principles recently urged, in regard to frequent Communion, by Pius X (*Sacra Trid. Synodus*, 1905) are found in St. Thomas (Q. lxxix, a. 8, Q. lxxx, a. 10), although he is not so explicit on this point as he is on the Communion of children. In the Decree *Quam Singulari* (1910) the pope cites St. Thomas, who teaches that, when children begin to have some use of reason, so that they can conceive some devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, they may be allowed to communicate (Q. lxxx, a. 9, ad 3um). The spiritual and devotional aspects of St. Thomas’s theology have been pointed out by Father Contenson, O.P., in his *Theologia mentis et cordis*. They are more fully explained by Father Vallgornera, O.P., in his *Theologia Mystica D. Thomae*, wherein the author leads the soul to God through the purgative, illuminative, and unitive ways. The Encyclical Letter of Leo XIII on the Holy Spirit is drawn largely from St. Thomas, and those who have studied the *Prima Secundae* and the *Secunda Secundae* know how admirably the saint explains the gifts and fruits of the Holy Ghost, as well as the Beatitudes, and their relations to the different

virtues Nearly all good spiritual writers seek in St. Thomas definitions of the virtues which they recommend.

B. Influence on Intellectual Life

Since the days of Aristotle, probably no one man has exercised such a powerful influence on the thinking world as did St. Thomas. His authority was very great during his lifetime. The popes, the universities, the studia of his order were anxious to profit by his learning and prudence. Several of his important works were written at the request of others, and his opinion was sought by all classes. On several occasions the doctors of Paris referred their disputes to him and gratefully abided by his decision (Vaughan, op. cit., II, 1 p. 544). His principles, made known by his writings, have continued to influence men even to this day. This subject cannot be considered in all its aspects, nor is that necessary. His influence on matters purely philosophical is fully explained in histories of philosophy. (Theologians who followed St. Thomas will be mentioned in THOMISM. See also PREACHERS, ORDER OF – II, A, 2, d) His paramount importance and influence may be explained by considering him as the Christian Aristotle, combining in his person the best that the world has known in philosophy and theology. It is in this light that he is proposed as a model by Leo XIII in the famous Encyclical *Aeterni Patris*. The work of his life may be summed up in two propositions: he established the true relations between faith and reason; he systematized theology.

(1) Faith and Reason

The principles of St. Thomas on the relations between faith and reason were solemnly proclaimed in the Vatican Council The second, third, and fourth chapters of the Constitution *Dei Filius* read like pages taken from the works of the Angelic Doctor. First, reason alone is no sufficient to guide men: they need Revelation; we must carefully distinguish the truths known by reason from higher truths (mysteries) known by Revelation. Secondly, reason and Revelation, though distinct, are not opposed to each other. Thirdly, faith preserves reason from error; reason should do service in the cause of faith. Fourthly, this service is rendered in three ways:

reason should prepare the minds of men to receive the Faith by proving the truths which faith presupposes (*praeambula fidei*);

reason should explain and develop the truths of Faith and should propose them in scientific form;

reason should defend the truths revealed by Almighty God.

This is a development of St. Augustine's famous saying (*De Trin.*, XIV, c. i), that the right use of reason is "that by which the most wholesome faith is begotten . . . is nourished, defended, and made strong" These principles are proposed by St. Thomas in many places, especially in the following: "In Boethium, d a Trin. Proem.", Q. ii, a. 1; *Sum. cont. gent.*, I, cc I iii-ix; *Summa*, I, Q. i, aa. 1, 5, 8; Q. xxxii, a. 1; Q i lxxxiv, a. 5. St. Thomas's services to the Faith are thus summed up by Leo XIII in the Encyclical *Aeterni Patris*: "He won this title of distinction for himself: that singlehanded he victoriously combated the errors of former times, and supplied invincible arms to put to rout those which might in after times spring up. Again, clearly distinguishing, as is fitting, reason and faith, he both preserved and had regard for the rights of each; so much so, indeed, that reason, borne on the wings of Thomas, can scarcely rise higher, while faith could scarcely expect more or stronger aids from reason than those which she has already obtained through Thomas." St. Thomas did not combat imaginary foes; he attacked living adversaries. The works of Aristotle had been introduced into France in faulty translations and with the misleading commentaries of Jewish and Moorish philosophers. This gave rise to a flood of errors which so alarmed the authorities that the reading of Aristotle's *Physics* and *Metaphysics* was forbidden by Robert de Courçon in 1210, the decree being moderated by Gregory IX in 1231. There crept into the University of Paris an insidious spirit of irreverence and Rationalism, represented especially by Abelard and Raymond Lullus, which claimed that reason could know and prove all things, even the mysteries of Faith. Under the authority of Averroes dangerous doctrines were propagated, especially two very pernicious errors: first, that philosophy and religion being in different regions, what is true in religion might be false in philosophy; secondly, that all men have but one soul. Averroes was commonly styled "The Commentator", but St. Thomas says he was "not so much a Peripatetic as a corruptor of Peripatetic

philosophy” (Opuse. de unit. intell.). Applying a principle of St. Augustine (see I, Q. lxxxiv, a. 5), following in the footsteps of Alexander of Hales and Albertus Magnus, St. Thomas resolved to take what was true from the “unjust possessors”, in order to press it into the service of revealed religion. Objections to Aristotle would cease if the true Aristotle were made known; hence his first care was to obtain a new translation of the works of the great philosopher. Aristotle was to be purified; false commentators were to be refuted; the most influential of these was Averroes, hence St. Thomas is continually rejecting his false interpretations.

(2) Theology Systematized

The next step was to press reason into the service of the Faith, by putting Christian doctrine into scientific form. Scholasticism does not consist, as some persons imagine, in useless discussions and subtleties, but in this, that it expresses sound doctrine in language which is accurate, clear, and concise. In the Encyclical *Aeterni Patris* Leo XIII, citing the words of Sixtus V (Bull “Triumphantis”, 1588), declares that to the right use of philosophy we are indebted for “those noble endowments which make Scholastic theology so formidable to the enemies of truth”, because “that ready coherence of cause and effect, that order and array of a disciplined army in battle, those clear definitions and distinctions, that strength of argument and those keen discussions by which light is distinguished from darkness, the true from the false, expose and lay bare, as it were, the falsehoods of heretics wrapped around by a cloud of subterfuges and fallacies”. When the great Scholastics had written, there was light where there had been darkness, there was order where confusion had prevailed. The work of St. Anselm and of Peter Lombard was perfected by the Scholastic theologians. Since their days no substantial improvements have been made in the plan and system of theology, although the field of apologetics has been widened, and positive theology has become more important.

C. St. Thomas’s Doctrine Followed

Within a short time after his death the writings of St. Thomas were universally esteemed. The Dominicans naturally took the lead in following St. Thomas. The general chapter held in Paris in 1279 pronounced severe

penalties against all who dared to speak irreverently (of him or of his writings. The chapters held in Paris in 1286, at Bordeaux in 1287, and at Lucca in 1288 expressly required the brethren to follow the doctrine of Thomas, who at that time had not been canonized (Const. Ord. Praed., n. 1130). The University of Paris, on the occasion of Thomas's death, sent an official letter of condolence to the general chapter of the Dominicans, declaring that, equally with his brethren, the university experienced sorrow at the loss of one who was their own by many titles (see text of letter in Vaughan, op. cit., II, p. 82). In the Encyclical *Aeterni Patris* Leo XIII mentions the Universities of Paris, Salamanca, Alcalá, Douai Toulouse, Louvain, Padua, Bologna, Naples, Coimbra as "the homes of human wisdom where Thomas reigned supreme, and the minds of all, of teachers as well as of taught, rested in wonderful harmony under the shield and authority of the Angelic Doctor". To the list may be added Lima and Manila, Fribourg and Washington. Seminaries and colleges followed the lead of the universities. The *Summa* gradually supplanted the *Sentences* as the textbook of theology. Minds were formed in accordance with the principles of St. Thomas; he became the great master, exercising a world-wide influence on the opinions of men and on their writings; for even those who did not adopt all of his conclusions were obliged to give due consideration to his opinions. It has been estimated that 6000 commentaries on St. Thomas's works have been written. Manuals of theology and of philosophy, composed with the intention of imparting his teaching, translations, and studies, or digests (*études*), of portions of his works have been published in profusion during the last six hundred years and to-day his name is in honour all over the world (see THOMISM). In every one of the general councils held since his death St. Thomas has been singularly honoured. At the Council of Lyons his book *Contra errores Graecorum* was used with telling effect against the Greeks. In later disputes, before and during the Council of Florence, John of Montenegro, the champion of Latin orthodoxy, found St. Thomas's works a source of irrefragable arguments. The *Decretum pro Armenis* (Instruction for the Armenians), issued by the authority of that council, is taken almost verbatim from his treatise, *De fidei articulis et septem sacramentis* (see Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 695). "In the Councils of Lyons, Vienne, Florence, and the Vatican", writes Leo XIII (Encyclical *Aeterni Patris*), "one might almost say that Thomas took part in and presided over the

deliberations and decrees of the Fathers contending against the errors of the Greeks, of heretics, and Rationalists, with invincible force and with the happiest results. But the chief and special glory of Thomas, one which he has shared with none of the Catholic doctors, is that the Fathers of Trent made it part of the order of the conclave to lay upon the altar, together with the code of Sacred Scripture and the decrees of the Supreme Pontiffs, the Summa of Thomas Aquinas, whence to seek counsel, reason, and inspiration. Greater influence than this no man could have. Before this section is closed mention should be made of two books widely known and highly esteemed, which were inspired by and drawn from the writings of St. Thomas. The Catechism of the Council of Trent, composed by disciples of the Angelic Doctor, is in reality a compendium of his theology, in convenient form for the use of parish priests. Dante's *Divina Commedia* has been called "the Summa of St. Thomas in verse", and commentators trace the great Florentine poet's divisions and descriptions of the virtues and vices to the *Secunda Secundae*.

D. Appreciation of St. Thomas

(1) In the Church

The esteem in which he was held during his life has not been diminished, but rather increased, in the course of the six centuries that have elapsed since his death. The position which he occupies in the Church is well explained by that great scholar Leo XIII, in the Encyclical *Aeterni Patris*, recommending the study of Scholastic philosophy: "It is known that nearly all the founders and framers of laws of religious orders commanded their societies to study and religiously adhere to the teachings of St. Thomas. . . To say nothing of the family of St. Dominic, which rightly claims this great teacher for its own glory, the statutes of the Benedictines, the Carmelites, the Augustinians, the Society of Jesus, and many others, all testify that they are bound by this law." Amongst the "many others" the Servites, the Passionists, the Barnabites, and the Sulpicians have been devoted in an especial manner to the study of St. Thomas. The principal ancient universities where St. Thomas ruled as the great master have been enumerated above. The Paris doctors called him the morning star, the luminous sun, the light of the whole Church. Stephen, Bishop of Paris, repressing those who dared to attack the doctrine of "that most excellent

Doctor, the blessed Thomas”, calls him “the great luminary of the Catholic Church, the precious stone of the priesthood, the flower of doctors, and the bright mirror of the University of Paris” (Drane, op. cit., p. 431). In the old Louvain University the doctors were required to uncover and bow their heads when they pronounced the name of Thomas (Goudin, op. cit., p. 21).

“The oecumenical councils, where blossoms the flower of all earthly wisdom, have always been careful to hold Thomas Aquinas in singular honour” (Leo XIII in “Aet. Patris”). This subject has been sufficiently treated above. The *Bullarium Ordinis Praedicatorum*, published in 1729-39, gives thirty-eight Bulls in which eighteen sovereign pontiffs praised and recommended the doctrine of St. Thomas (see also Vaughan, op. cit., II, c. ii; Berthier, op. cit., pp. 7 sqq.). These approbations are recalled and renewed by Leo XIII, who lays special stress on “the crowning testimony of Innocent VI: ‘His teaching above that of others, the canons alone excepted, enjoys such an elegance of phraseology, a method of statement, a truth of proposition, that those who hold it are never found swerving from the path of truth, and he who dare assail it will always be suspected of error (ibid.).’” Leo XIII surpassed his predecessors in admiration of St. Thomas, in whose works he declared a remedy can be found for many evils that afflict society (see Berthier, op. cit., introd.). The notable Encyclical Letters with which the name of that illustrious pontiff will always be associated show how he had studied the works of the Angelic Doctor. This is very noticeable in the letters on Christian marriage, the Christian constitution of states, the condition of the working classes, and the study of Holy Scripture. Pope Pius X, in several Letters, e.g. in the *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (Sept., 1907), has insisted on the observance of the recommendations of Leo XIII concerning the study of St. Thomas. An attempt to give names of Catholic writers who have expressed their appreciation of St. Thomas and of his influence would be an impossible undertaking; for the list would include nearly all who have written on philosophy or theology since the thirteenth century, as well as hundreds of writers on other subjects. Commendations and eulogies are found in the introductory chapters of all good commentaries. An incomplete list of authors who have collected these testimonies is given by Father Berthier (op. cit., p. 22). . . .

(2) Outside the Church

(a) Anti-Scholastics – Some persons have been and are still opposed to everything that comes under the name of Scholasticism, which they bold to be synonymous with subtleties and useless discussions. From the prologue to the *Summa* it is clear that St. Thomas was opposed to all that was superfluous and confusing in Scholastic studies. When people understand what true Scholasticism means, their objections will cease.

(b) Heretics and Schismatics – “A last triumph was reserved for this incomparable man – namely, to compel the homage, praise, and admiration of even the very enemies of the Catholic name” (Leo XIII, *ibid.*). St. Thomas’s orthodoxy drew upon him the hatred of all Greeks who were opposed to union with Rome. The united Greeks, however, admire St. Thomas and study his works (see above Translations of the *Summa*). The leaders of the sixteenth-century revolt honoured St. Thomas by attacking him, Luther being particularly violent in his coarse invectives against the great doctor. Citing Bucer’s wild boast, “Take away Thomas and I will destroy the Church”, Leo XIII (*ibid.*) remarks, “The hope was vain, but the testimony has its value”. Calo, Tocco, and other biographers relate that St. Thomas, travelling from Rome to Naples, converted two celebrated Jewish rabbis, whom he met at the country house of Cardinal Richard (Prümmer, *op. cit.*, p. 33; Vaughan, *op. cit.*, I, p. 795). Rabbi Paul of Burgos, in the fifteenth century, was converted by reading the works of St. Thomas. Theobald Thamer, a disciple of Melancthon, abjured his heresy after he had read the *Summa*, which he intended to refute. The Calvinist Duperron was converted in the same way, subsequently becoming Archbishop of Sens and a cardinal (see Conway, O.P., *op. cit.*, p. 96). After the bitterness of the first period of Protestantism had passed away, Protestants saw the necessity of retaining many parts of Catholic philosophy and theology, and those who came to know St. Thomas were compelled to admire him. Ueberweg says “He brought the Scholastic philosophy to its highest stage of development, by effecting the most perfect accommodation that was possible of the Aristotelian philosophy to ecclesiastical orthodoxy” (*op. cit.*, p. 440). R. Seeberg in the *New Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia* (New York, 1911) devotes ten columns to St. Thomas, and says that “at all points he succeeded in upholding the church doctrine as credible and

reasonable” (XI, p. 427). For many years, especially since the days of Pusey and Newman, St. Thomas has been in high repute at Oxford. Recently the *Summa Contra Gentiles* was placed on the list of subjects which a candidate may offer in the final honour schools of Litterae Humaniores at that university (cf. Walsh, op. cit., c. xvii). For several years Father De Groot, O.P., has been the professor of Scholastic philosophy in the University of Amsterdam, and courses in Scholastic philosophy have been established in some of the leading non-Catholic universities of the United States. Anglicans have a deep admiration for St. Thomas. Alfred Mortimer, in the chapter “The Study of Theology” of his work entitled “Catholic Faith and Practice” (2 vols., New York, 1909), regretting that “the English priest has ordinarily no scientific acquaintance with the Queen of Sciences”, and proposing a remedy, says, “The simplest and most perfect sketch of universal theology is to be found in the *Summa* of St. Thomas” (vol. II, pp. 454, 465).

V. ST. THOMAS AND MODERN THOUGHT

In the Syllabus of 1864 Pius IX condemned a proposition in which it was stated that the method and principles of the ancient Scholastic doctors were not suited to the needs of our times and the progress of science (Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 1713). In the Encyclical *Aeterni Patris* Leo XIII points out the benefits to be derived from “a practical reform of philosophy by restoring the renowned teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas”. He exhorts the bishops to “restore the golden wisdom of Thomas and to spread it far and wide for the defence and beauty of the Catholic Faith, for the good of society, and for the advantage of all the sciences”. In the pages of the Encyclical immediately preceding these words he explains why the teaching of St. Thomas would produce such most desirable results: St. Thomas is the great master to explain and defend the Faith, for his is “the solid doctrine of the Fathers and the Scholastics, who so clearly and forcibly demonstrate the firm foundations of the Faith, its Divine origin, its certain truth, the arguments that sustain it, the benefits it has conferred on the human race, and its perfect accord with reason, in a manner to satisfy completely minds open to persuasion, however unwilling and repugnant”. The career of St. Thomas would in itself have justified Leo XIII in assuring men of the nineteenth century that the Catholic Church was not opposed to the right use of reason. The sociological aspects of St.

Thomas are also pointed out: “The teachings of Thomas on the true meaning of liberty, which at this time is running into license, on the Divine origin of all authority, on laws and their force, on the paternal and just rule of princes, on obedience to the highest powers, on mutual charity one towards another – on all of these and kindred subjects, have very great and invincible force to overturn those principles of the new order which are well known to be dangerous to the peaceful order of things and to public safety” (ibid.). The evils affecting modern society had been pointed out by the pope in the Letter *Inscrutabili* of 21 April, 1878, and in the one on Socialism, Communism, and Nihilism (*The Great Encyclicals of Leo XIII*, pp. 9 sqq.; 22 sqq.). How the principles of the Angelic Doctor will furnish a remedy for these evils is explained here in a general way, more particularly in the Letters on the Christian constitution of states, human liberty, the chief duties of Christians as citizens, and on the conditions of the working classes (ibid., pp. 107, 135, 180, 208).

It is in relation to the sciences that some persons doubt the availability of St. Thomas’s writings; and the doubters are thinking of the physical and experimental sciences, for in metaphysics the scholastics are admitted to be masters. Leo XIII calls attention to the following truths: (a) The Scholastics were not opposed to investigation. Holding as a principle in anthropology “that the human intelligence is only led to the knowledge of things without body and matter by things sensible, they well understood that nothing was of greater use to the philosopher than diligently to search into the mysteries of nature, and to be earnest and constant in the study of physical things” (ibid., p. 55). This principle was reduced to practice: St. Thomas, St. Albertus Magnus, Roger Bacon, and others “gave large attention to the knowledge of natural things” (ibid., p. 56). (b) Investigation alone is not sufficient for true science. “When facts have been established, it is necessary to rise and apply ourselves to the study of the nature of corporeal things, to inquire into the laws which govern them and the principles whence their order and varied unity and mutual attraction in diversity arise” (p. 55). Will the scientists of to-day pretend to be better reasoners than St. Thomas, or more powerful in synthesis? It is the method and the principles of St. Thomas that Leo XIII recommends: “If anything is taken up with too great subtlety by the scholastic doctors, or too carelessly stated; if there be anything that ill agrees with the

discoveries of a later age or, in a word, is improbable in any way, it does not enter into our mind to propose that for imitation to our age” (p. 56). Just as St. Thomas, in his day, saw a movement towards Aristotle and philosophical studies which could not be checked, but could be guided in the right direction and made to serve the cause of truth, so also, Leo XIII, seeing in the world of his time a spirit of study and investigation which might be productive of evil or of good, had no desire to check it, but resolved to propose a moderator and master who could guide it in the paths of truth.

No better guide could have been chosen than the clear-minded, analytic, synthetic, and sympathetic Thomas Aquinas. His extraordinary patience and fairness in dealing with erring philosophers, his approbation of all that was true in their writings, his gentleness in condemning what was false, his clear-sightedness in pointing out the direction to true knowledge in all its branches, his aptness and accuracy in expressing the truth – these qualities mark him as a great master not only for the thirteenth century, but for all times. If any persons are inclined to consider him too subtle, it is because they do not know how clear, concise, and simple are his definitions and divisions. His two *summae* are masterpieces of pedagogy, and mark him as the greatest of human teachers. Moreover, he dealt with errors similar to many which go under the name of philosophy or science in our days. The Rationalism of Abelard and others called forth St. Thomas’s luminous and everlasting principles on the true relations of faith and reason. Ontologism was solidly refuted by St. Thomas nearly six centuries before the days of Malebranche, Gioberti, and Ubaghs (see *Sum. theol.*, I, Q. lxxxiv, a. 5). The true doctrine on first principles and on universals, given by him and by the other great Scholastics, is the best refutation of Kant’s criticism of metaphysical ideas (see, e.g., *Post. Analyt.*, I, lect. xix; *De ente et essentia*, c. iv; *Sum. theol.*, I, Q. xvii, a. 3, corp. and ad 2um; Q. lxxix, a. 3; Q. lxxxiv, a. 5, a. 6, corp. and ad 1um, Q. lxxxv, a. 2, ad 2um, a. 3, ad 1um, ad 4um. Cf. index to *Summa: Veritas, Principium, Universale*). Modern psychological Pantheism does not differ substantially from the theory of one soul for all men asserted by Averroes (see *De unit. intell.* and *Sum. theol.*, I, Q. lxxvi, a. 2; Q. lxxix, a.5). The Modernistic error, which distinguishes the Christ of faith from the Christ of history, had as its

forerunner the Averroistic principle that a thing might be true in philosophy and false in religion.

In the Encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* (18 Nov., 1893) Leo XIII draws from St. Thomas's writings the principles and wise rules which should govern scientific criticism of the Sacred Books. From the same source recent writers have drawn principles which are most helpful in the solution of questions pertaining to Spiritism and Hypnotism. Are we to conclude, then, that St. Thomas's works, as he left them, furnish sufficient instruction for scientists, philosophers, and theologians of our times? By no means. *Vetera novis augere et perficere* – "To strengthen and complete the old by aid of the new" – is the motto of the restoration proposed by Leo XIII. Were St. Thomas living to-day he would gladly adopt and use all the facts made known by recent scientific and historical investigations, but he would carefully weigh all evidence offered in favour of the facts. Positive theology is more necessary in our days than it was in the thirteenth century. Leo XIII calls attention to its necessity in his Encyclical, and his admonition is renewed by Pius X in his Letter on Modernism. But both pontiffs declare that positive theology must not be extolled to the detriment of Scholastic theology. In the Encyclical *Pascendi*, prescribing remedies against Modernism, Pius X, following in this his illustrious predecessor, gives the first place to "Scholastic philosophy, especially as it was taught by Thomas Aquinas", St. Thomas is still "The Angel of the Schools".

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74. Of the Subject of Sin
75. Of the Causes of Sin, if General
76. Of the Causes of Sin, in Particular
77. Of the Cause of Sin, on the Part of the Sensitive Appetite
78. Of That Cause of Sin Which Is Malice
79. Of the External Causes of Sin
80. Of the Cause Of Sin, As Regards the Devil
81. Of the Cause of Sin, on the Part of Man
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84. Of the Cause of Sin, in Respect of One Sin Being the Cause Of Another
85. Of the Effects of Sin, and, First, of the Corruption of the Good of Nature
86. Of the Stain of Sin

- 87. Of the Debt of Punishment
- 88. Of Venial and Mortal Sin
- 89. Of Venial Sin in Itself

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- 90. Of the Essence of Law
- 91. Of the Various Kinds of Law
- 92. Of the Effects of Law
- 93. Of the Eternal Law
- 94. Of the Natural Law
- 95. Of Human Law
- 96. Of the Power of Human Law
- 97. Of Change in Laws
- 98. Of the Old Law
- 99. Of the Precepts of the Old Law
- 100. Of the Moral Precepts of the Old Law
- 101. Of the Ceremonial Precepts in Themselves
- 102. Of the Causes of the Ceremonial Precepts
- 103. Of the Duration of the Ceremonial Precepts
- 104. Of the Judicial Precepts
- 105. Of the Reason for the Judicial Precepts
- 106. Of the Law of the Gospel, Called the New Law, Considered in Itself
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- 108. Of Those Things That Are Contained in the New Law
- 109. Of the Necessity of Grace
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- 112. Of the Cause of Grace
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5. Of Those Who Have Faith
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16. Of the Precepts of Faith, Knowledge, and Understanding
17. Of Hope, Considered in Itself
18. Of the Subject of Hope
19. Of the Gift of Fear
20. Of Despair
21. Of Presumption
22. Of the Precepts Relating to Hope and Fear
23. Of Charity, Considered in Itself
24. Of the Subject of Charity
25. Of the Object of Charity
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27. Of the Principal Act of Charity, Which Is to Love
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- 35. Of Sloth
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- 44. Of the Precepts of Charity
- 45. Of the Gift of Wisdom
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- 48. Of the Parts of Prudence
- 49. Of Each Quasi-integral Part of Prudence
- 50. Of the Subjective Parts of Prudence
- 51. Of the Virtues Which Are Connected with Prudence
- 52. Of the Gift of Counsel
- 53. Of Imprudence
- 54. Of Negligence
- 55. Of Vices Opposed to Prudence by Way of Resemblance
- 56. Of the Precepts Relating to Prudence
- 57. Of Right
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- 60. Of Judgment
- 61. Of the Parts of Justice
- 62. Of Restitution
- 63. Of Respect of Persons
- 64. Of Murder
- 65. Of Injuries Committed on the Person
- 66. Of Theft and Robbery
- 67. Of the Injustice of a Judge, in Judging

68. Of Matters Concerning Unjust Accusation
69. Of Sins Committed Against Justice on the Part of the Defendant
70. Of Injustice with Regard to the Person of the Witness
71. Of Injustice in Judgment on the Part of Counsel
72. Of Reviling
73. Of Backbiting
74. Of Tale-Bearing
75. Of Derision
76. Of Cursing
77. Of Cheating, Which is Committed in Buying and Selling
78. Of the Sin of Usury
79. Of the Quasi-integral Parts of Justice
80. Of the Potential Parts of Justice
81. Of Religion
82. Of Devotion
83. Of Prayer
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85. Of Sacrifice
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90. Of the Taking of God's Name by Way of Adjuration
91. Of Taking the Divine Name for the Purpose of Invoking It by Means of Praise
92. Of Superstition
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94. Of Idolatry
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100. On Simony
101. Of Piety
102. Of Observance, Considered in Itself, and of Its Parts
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- 106. Of Thankfulness or Gratitude
- 107. Of Ingratitude
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- 111. Of Dissimulation and Hypocrisy
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- 115. Of Flattery
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- 117. Of Liberality
- 118. Of the Vices Opposed to Liberality, and in the First Place, of Covetousness
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- 121. Of Piety
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- 124. Of Martyrdom
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- 127. Of Daring
- 128. Of the Parts of Fortitude
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- 139. Of the Gift of Fortitude
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- 164. Of the Punishments of the First Man's Sin
- 165. Of Our First Parents' Temptation
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- 172. Of the Cause of Prophecy
- 173. Of the Manner in Which Prophetic Knowledge Is Conveyed
- 174. Of the Division of Prophecy
- 175. Of Rapture
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- 177. Of the Gratuitous Grace Consisting in Words
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- 179. Of the Division of Life Into Active and Contemplative
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- 182. Of the Active Life in Comparison With the Contemplative Life
- 183. Of Man's Various Duties and States in General
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- 188. Of the Different Kinds of Religious Life
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THIRD PART

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2. Of the Mode of Union of the Word Incarnate
3. Of the Mode of Union on the Part of the Person Assuming
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5. Of the Parts of Human Nature Which Were Assumed
6. Of the Order of Assumption
7. Of the Grace of Christ as an Individual Man
8. Of the Grace of Christ as He Is the Head of the Church
9. Of Christ's Knowledge in General
10. Of the Beatific Knowledge of Christ's Soul
11. Of the Knowledge Imprinted or Infused on the Soul of Christ
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13. Of the Power of Christ's Soul
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15. Of the Defects of Soul Assumed by Christ
16. Of Those Things Which Are Applicable to Christ in His Being and Becoming
17. Of Christ's Unity of Being
18. Of Christ's Unity of Will
19. Of the Unity of Christ's Operation
20. Of Christ's Subjection to the Father
21. Of Christ's Prayer
22. Of the Priesthood of Christ
23. Of Adoption as Befitting to Christ
24. Of the Predestination of Christ
25. Of the Adoration of Christ
26. Of Christ as Called the Mediator of God and Man
27. Of the Sanctification of the Blessed Virgin
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30. Of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin
31. Of the Matter From Which the Savior's Body Was Conceived
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33. Of the Mode and Order of Christ's Conception
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37. Of Christ's Circumcision, and of the Other Legal Observances
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57. Of the Ascension of Christ
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59. Of Christ's Judiciary Prayer
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61. Of the Necessity of the Sacraments
62. Of the Sacraments' Principal Effect, Which is Grace
63. Of the Other Effect of the Sacraments, Which Is a Character
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- 67. Of the Ministers by Whom the Sacrament of Baptism Is
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- 68. Of Those Who Receive Baptism
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- 81. Of the Use Which Christ Made of This Sacrament at Its
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- 82. Of the Minister of This Sacrament
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- 84. Of the Sacrament of Penance
- 85. Of Penance as a Virtue
- 86. Of the Effect of Penance, As Regards the Pardon of Mortal Sin
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- 89. Of the Recovery of Virtue by Means of Penance
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2. Of the Object of Contrition
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5. Of the Effect of Contrition
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7. Of the Nature of Confession
8. Of the Minister of Confession
9. Of the Quality of Confession
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12. Of Satisfaction, As to Its Nature
13. Of the Possibility of Satisfaction
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20. Of Those on Whom the Power of the Keys Can Be Exercised
21. Of the Definition, Congruity and Cause of Excommunication
22. Of Those Who Can Excommunicate or Be Excommunicated
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24. Of Absolution from Excommunication
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41. Of the Sacrament of Matrimony As Directed to an Office of Nature
42. Of Matrimony As a Sacrament
43. Of Matrimony with Regard to the Betrothal
44. Of the Definition of Matrimony
45. Of the Marriage Consent Considered in Itself
46. Of the Consent to Which an Oath or Carnal Intercourse Is Added
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49. Of the Marriage Goods
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58. Of the Impediments of Impotence, Spell, Frenzy or Madness, Incest and Defective Age
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61. Of the Impediment to Marriage, Arising from a Solemn Vow
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69. Of Matters Concerning the Resurrection, and First of the Place Where Souls Are after Death
70. Of the Quality of the Soul after Leaving the Body, and of the Punishment Inflicted on It by Material Fire
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97. Of the Punishment of the Damned
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APPENDIX I

[A Supplement To The Supplement, To Be Read Between Questions 70 And 71]

1. Of the Quality of Those Souls Who Depart This Life with Original Sin Only
2. Of the Quality of Souls Who Expiate Actual Sin or Its Punishment in Purgatory

APPENDIX II

Two Articles on Purgatory

PUBLISHERS NOTES

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