ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

AND

MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY

BY

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INTRODUCTION

THE revived interest in Scholastic philosophy, which received such a powerful impetus from the publication of the "Æterni Patris" by Leo XIII, in 1879, far from abating, continues to increase. In ecclesiastical circles the works of Saint Thomas are of prime importance, especially since Pope Pius X. in his Letter against Modernism (1907) and in the "Doctoris Angelici" (1914), decreed that Scholastic philosophy according to the mind and method of St. Thomas should be the basis for the theological studies which are to be a safeguard and bulwark against modernistic errors and tendencies. The new Code of Canon Law imposes on all professors of philosophy and theology the obligation of adhering religiously to the doctrine and principles of St. Thomas. The Angelic Doctor was the greatest of many men who cultivated reason and used it in the defence and explanation of Christian truth. Many volumes would be required to give a comprehensive review of thirteenth century conditions and of his influence on medieval thought, and the following pages do not pretend to give such a complete and comprehensive review. It is hoped, however, that they will serve to explain, in a brief and summary manner, the influence of St. Thomas on medieval philosophy, thereby creating a desire for deeper study of that important period. For those who intend to pursue ecclesiastical studies some knowledge of conditions prevailing in the Scholastic period is essential, since without this knowledge they will find it impossible properly to appreciate the work of the great Scholastic doctors. All cannot be told in one book, but even a short history of that period, with mention of the principal errors which the Scholastics were called upon to combat, will add to our gratitude for the services rendered by those enlightened and valiant defenders of the Faith. The matter is treated in a popular way, so that from the sketches given even the ordinary reader can form a fairly accurate conception of the position that St. Thomas holds in the history of medieval philosophy. For the benefit of those who may wish to make a deeper study of this subject there is added a bibliography, which will be found especially helpful to beginners.

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CHAPTER I

THE RISE OF SCHOLASTICISM—ST. ANSELM (1034-1109)

Much attention has been given, especially in recent times, to questions relating to evolution. This is a very broad subject, including in its various aspects many theories and discussions concerning the origin and development of all forms of created being and life. Naturally inquisitive and studious, man attempts to explain the nature of all things that come under his observation, and becomes deeply interested in the study of their origin and development, whether the subject of his investigation be the oak springing from the acorn, the visible world created by Almighty God, or the human soul, created also by God, and gradually developing its faculties until man reaches the highest perfection attainable in this world.

Some persons think that the most important study in evolution is offered by the visible world in which we live. The story of the Creation comes to us in an inspired book, commanding all the attention and respect due to any book of which God is the author. But, were it possible to abstract from the fact that faith and revelation are necessarily involved when we consider the origin and evolution of the universe, it is certain that more attention should be given to the history of the mind than to the history of the material beings of our visible world.

In the history of minds there is no chapter more interesting or more instructive than that which deals with the progress of men in the knowledge of philosophy during the Middle Ages, from the beginning of the ninth to the end of the thirteenth century. Those centuries are so little known, and have been so grossly misrepresented, that many men, even amongst those who consider themselves educated and fair-minded, are not prepared to hear that the Middle Ages can be considered as model or ideal in any respect whatsoever. Nevertheless, it can be boldly asserted and proved that the centuries, which too often have been called "dark," were the ages in which men reached the summit of mental progress and intellectual perfection. In the experimental sciences, and in all that pertains to material progress, the twentieth century surpasses the thirteenth, which may be called the banner century of the Middle Ages; but when this concession has been made, we may ask: In what else can our times claim superiority? In faith and spirituality, in literature and architecture, in philosophy and theology, our days will suffer very much in the comparison. And it must be borne in mind that the branches in which the Middle Ages excelled are the very branches which constitute, or presuppose, the cultivation and development of all that is highest and noblest in man's nature.

Have men been so blinded by prejudice that they lose sight of the superiority of mind over matter? It is scarcely credible that intelligent men are willing to assert that the remarkable engineering feats, the elegant trains lighted by electricity, the automobiles and airships of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are sufficient indications of progress and perfection to settle the question of superiority. The men of the thirteenth century deserve more credit for one beautiful Gothic cathedral than we are entitled to claim for all our automobiles and airships, and when we consider the development of man's mind and his progress in

the art of knowing, any candid observer must admit that we have much to learn from the much-abused Middle Ages. The experimental sciences will be more fully considered in a subsequent chapter (Ch. III).

SCHOLASTICISM.—The study of Scholastic philosophy and the use of philosophical knowledge in explaining and defending the truths of faith are distinguishing features of the Middle Ages. So well did the philosophers and theologians of those times understand the true relations of faith and reason that their principles were solemnly adopted and proclaimed in our own times, viz., in the Vatican Council.

Rome was not built in a day; the philosophical systems of the Schoolmen were not built in a day. There were years of investigation, doubt and dispute before their systems were formulated. We can trace the rise and progress and the perfection of Scholasticism. We begin the study of the subject by considering all that is brought to mind by the name of St. Anselm, who is usually styled the "Father of Scholasticism" in the Western Church.

What Scholasticism is not.—Scholasticism has been misunderstood and misrepresented more than any other feature of life in the Middle Ages. To this very day there are many for whom the word is synonymous with subtlety and logic-chopping. That there have been abuses of Scholasticism, and that these abuses furnished pretexts for rejecting the system, is freely admitted. The existence and causes of those abuses will be considered in a subsequent chapter. Nevertheless, here, as elsewhere, we should apply the principle that what is good should not be condemned or rejected because it has been abused. He is a poor student of history and philosophy who thinks that subtlety is the quintessence, or even a necessary element or property, of Scholastic philosophy. Many of its terms are not readily understood by

the ordinary student and they cannot lay claim to elegance in latinity. But, is it not true that medicine, jurisprudence, chemistry, botany, biology, and other sciences employ technical terms that are not understood by the uninitiated? We do not on that account reject those sciences. Why should we apply a different rule to Scholastic philosophy, especially since we are not prepared to offer a suitable substitute for the teaching and terminology of the Schoolmen? Correct the abuses; suppress idle discussions; banish confusing subtleties; but retain what is good in Scholasticism, for it is of great value. Scholasticism, in the first place, represents the highest form of intellectual activity and intellectual perfection; in the second place, for those who are Christians, it is of the utmost importance in explaining and defending the mysteries of faith.

What is Philosophy?—Philosophy is the love, desire, and pursuit of wisdom. Taken in its broadest sense it includes the knowledge of all things in as far as they can be known by the light of reason: *"Rerum divinarum et humanarum causarumque quibus hæ res continentur scientia";*[1] the knowledge of human and divine things and of the causes by which they are related to each other. Philosophy, in a restricted sense, is "the knowledge of things in their highest and most universal causes, so far as such knowledge is attainable by the natural light of reason."[2]

Ordinary scientific knowledge is satisfied when it assigns the immediate or proximate causes of things that come under our observation; wisdom, or philosophy, refers those same things to their still higher and more universal causes; that is, it seeks to understand and explain them in their essence, as it is absolutely and must be. Philosophy seeks to explain the intrinsic nature of things and their relation to more universal truths."[3] It is, to

[1] Cicero, "De Officiis," L. II, C. II.
[2] Hill, "Introd. to Phil."
[3] Hill, op. cit.

make use of a common expression, the knowledge which consists in "going to the bottom of things," penetrating into the deepest recesses of their being, and assigning the very last and highest, and deepest reasons for all that is asserted concerning the object of the investigation.

Philosophy as a special science, and, as it is taught nowadays, is taken in a much more restricted sense. It is not the knowledge of all things, but the *knowledge of certain higher things,* higher truths, *in as far as they can be known by the light of natural reason.*

This special science has six parts:

Logic, which treats of the laws of right reasoning;
Ontology, or Metaphysics, which has for its object the essential predicates of all things, and deals with truths which are strictly and absolutely universal;
Cosmology, which treats of the visible world;
Anthropology, which treats of man, especially of the soul.
Natural Theology, which treats of God;
Ethics, or Moral Theology, which treats of moral good and the rules of conduct.

Physics, which for many centuries was considered a part of general philosophy, is now a special treatise on matter and material bodies and their phenomena.

Periods in History of Philosophy.—In the history of philosophy various stages or periods are distinguished. (A) The period of *ancient philosophy,* the philosophy of the Jews, the Greeks, and the Romans down to the time of Christ. (B) Then came the philosophy of the *Fathers of the Church,* which was gradually developed into (C) the Scholastic system. (D) The decline of

Scholasticism, and the philosophy of the *Renaissance.* Finally (E), we have *modern philosophy,* i.e., the philosophy of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries.

(A).—The first period—the time before Christ—was a period of effort and struggle. Great and noble were the efforts of pagan philosophers to arrive at the knowledge of the truth; great were Cicero and Seneca, great were Plato and Aristotle; but reason without revelation, in the state of fallen nature, never had and cannot have a perfect knowledge of truths even of the natural order. In his Encyclical "Æterni Patris," on the restoration of philosophical studies, Leo XIII says: "Even those who were considered the wisest of ancient philosophers, but who had not the gift of faith, erred most grievously in many things. They often taught, along with many truths, things false and absurd, and very many that were doubtful and uncertain respecting the nature of God, the first origin of things, the government of the world, the divine knowledge of futurity, the cause and origin of evil, man's last end and eternal happiness; respecting virtues and vices, and many other subjects a true and certain knowledge of which is of the utmost importance to the human race."

(B).—With the introduction and spread of Christianity came *Christian Philosophy,* which is represented in the first ages of the Church by the Apologists and the Fathers. Christian Philosophy is nothing more than reason used in the service of faith and revelation. The Fathers, guided by St. Paul,[4] cautioned the followers of Christ against philosophy and vain deceit according to the traditions of men, but they did not condemn sound philosophy and the right use of reason, "by which," St. Augustine says, "wholesome faith is begotten, nourished, defended, and strengthened." [5]

In the first eight centuries of the Christian era we have the

[4] Col., ii, 8.
[5] St. Aug., "De Trin.," lib. XIV, c. 1.

names of such philosophical writers as Dionysius the Areopagite, first century; St. Justin, Athenagoras, St. Irenæus, second century; Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, third century; St. Augustine, fourth century; Boethius, Isidore of Seville, Cassiodorus, sixth century; Venerable Bede and St. John Damascene, eighth century. This brings us down to the period of Scholastic philosophy. St. John Damascene is called the "Father of Scholasticism" in the Eastern Church, as St. Anselm is in the Western Church, because they were the first notable, orthodox writers who applied the principles of Aristotle's Logic and Metaphysics to the study of Theology.[6]

(C).—Etymologically and historically *Scholastic Philosophy* is simply the philosophy which was taught in the schools, in the time of Charlemagne, and afterwards, whether they were the schools properly so called, opened at the courts, at the episcopal sees, and in the monasteries, or the episcopal seminaries and the universities. All knowledge acquired in those days was called scholastic, and Scholastic philosophy was simply that method of philosophizing and of teaching philosophy which was adopted in the schools because it was well adapted to their needs.

Charlemagne was a great patron of learning, and it is to the schools and masters of his time that we trace the beginnings of Scholasticism. Venerable Bede and St. John Damascene, who lived in the eighth century, may be regarded as the last representatives of Patristic philosophy, and St. John is the connecting link between the Fathers and the Scholastics.

Great things in this world usually have modest beginnings, and Scholasticism, which has exercised such a remarkable influence on the theology and history of the Church, is not an exception to the rule. The ninth century marks the beginning of Scholasticism; and the first Scholastics were men who did not devote themselves exclusively, or principally, to the study of philosophy. Alcuin, Rabanus Maurus, Scotus Erigena, and

[6]Vallet, "Hist. de la Phil.," Paris, 1866, p. 179; Alzog, "Church Hist.," vol. II, p. 740.

Remigius of Auxerre were rather the great schoolmasters of their times; and a schoolmaster in those days was supposed to be skilled in all branches of learning, literature, history, and the Sacred Scriptures being the favorite studies.

In the schools the pupils were instructed in the seven liberal arts, under the name of the *Trivium,* embracing grammar, logic, and rhetoric, and the *Quadrivium,* which included arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy.

Remigius of Auxerre was the first to teach logic in the schools of Paris. Alcuin, and his disciple, Rabanus Maurus, who were the greatest scholars of their age, wrote treatises on philosophy and commentaries on some of the works of Aristotle. Then began that extraordinary zeal for learning and eagerness for the study of philosophy and theology which was continued in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, culminating in the glories of the university of Paris and the great Scholastic doctors of the thirteenth century, Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure, Albertus Magnus, and St. Thomas of Aquin. Whoever reads the history of those times will find it impossible to understand how anything but ignorance and prejudice could account for the assertion that the Church is the enemy of science and learning.

All parts of the picture are not equally bright and attractive. There was the barrenness of the tenth century, called by Baronius "the iron age." There were the strange theories and errors of Gotteschalk, Scotus Erigena, and Abelard, and the almost endless disputes on the Universals. All this is freely admitted, but in this very excitement, in these errors, and in the struggles for sound doctrine, we find proofs of that intellectual activity which characterizes the ninth, eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, and which finally gave to the world those intellectual giants of the thirteenth century, whose greatness has never been called in

question, and who remain to this day unsurpassed in the extent, accuracy, and solidity of their learning.

The human mind was developing its latent energies; men applied themselves with avidity to the solution of all problems that could be proposed; reason was exercised, cultivated and puffed up; sound philosophy was needed to determine the limits of reason, and to point out the true relations of faith and reason.

In the very beginning of the Scholastic movement philosophy was called upon to serve as the handmaid of religion. Alcuin, in the Council of Aix-la-Chapelle (799), used his knowledge of philosophy to refute the error of the Adoptionists, who, by stating that Christ was the adopted son of God, revived the error of the Nestorians. Adoption, he argued, is predicated of a person; if Christ is the adopted son of God, then there is in Christ a human personality as well as the divine personality; and this is the heresy of Nestorius.

Hincmar, Archbishop of Reims, was not so happy in choosing Scotus Erigena to oppose the teachings of Gotteschalk, the ex-monk of Fulda, who had broached opinions on the subject of predestination which were afterwards openly professed by the Jansenists and the Calvinists; for Erigena proved to be a poor champion of the faith. In his work on Predestination he favored the errors which he had been asked to refute, and sowed the seeds of Rationalism by asserting the supremacy of reason over authority in matters of faith. In his philosophical treatise, "De Natura Rerum," he fell into Pantheism, representing the Creator and the creature as essentially one and the same. Thus in the very beginning we find that mixture of good and evil, that use and abuse of philosophy and reason, that conflict of faith and human pride, which darkened many pages of the Church's history, and furnished a pretext for many harsh things that have been said and

written against the Scholastics. Men sometimes seem to forget that all good things can be abused. It is not surprising that, in the first burst of enthusiasm and success, philosophers should have been carried away on the wings of pride, and should have attempted to attain by reason to the knowledge of secrets which God alone can reveal.

Before condemning Erigena and Abelard, of whom more will be said hereafter, before passing too severe a judgment on those who made mistakes nine hundred years ago, when the scientific study of philosophy was in its infancy, it would be well to cast a glance over the history of more recent times, and to remember how many erroneous opinions concerning the true relations of faith and reason have been proposed, professed, and condemned in later days, e.g., in the latter half of the last century. Some of the early Scholastics erred, but their errors were at once detected and condemned; sound reason and orthodoxy always found champions to defend their claims.

Saint Anselm.—The great champion of sound philosophy and of orthodoxy in those days was the pious and learned St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury. Born in the year 1034, at Aosta, in Piedmont, he came to France, studied for three years in Burgundy, and in 1059, when he was twenty-five years of age, entered the famous school of Bec, in Normandy, which was the most celebrated school of the eleventh century. Three years later he became prior, and in 1078 was made abbot of the monastery, succeeding his countryman, Lanfranc of Pavia, who had been made archbishop of Canterbury. Lanfranc died in 1089, and four years later Anselm was appointed to the see of Canterbury, where he died in 1109.

Anselm represents all that is best in the first period of Scholasticism. The extent of his learning has never been called in question; his judgment was enlightened and sound; and, at a

time when even the learned might have been confused by the multiplication of strange theories occasioned by the efforts of scholars to cultivate all branches of learning, he was the champion of truth and orthodoxy. Loyal to the faith, he made due allowance for the claims of reason, and held that it was a "sacred duty to reduce the truths of faith to scientific form, the neglect of which would expose Christians to the opprobrium of being inferior to the pagans." This is the underlying principle of his "Prosologium," which has been called *Fides quærens intellectum,* or, the truths of faith scientifically explained and developed.

Arguments to Prove the Existence of God.—It was in this work that he proposed his celebrated argument to prove the existence of God. This argument was afterwards proposed, though in a modified form, by Descartes, in the seventeenth century, and it is still a subject of controversy among writers on philosophy. The famous argument is as follows: Every man has an idea of God; even atheists, who deny the existence of God, must admit that they have mental conceptions of such a Being. Now, what is the idea of God? It is the idea of a being greater than which nothing can be conceived. But such a being necessarily exists outside of the mind; because, if it exists only in the mind, we could think of something greater, namely, of this same being as existing outside of the mind. Therefore, that Being greater than which nothing can be conceived necessarily exists.

This argument was at once assailed by Gaunilo, a monk of Marmoutiers, on the ground that it was not lawful to conclude from a mental conception to an objective reality. St. Thomas Aquinas,[7] without mentioning St. Anselm's name, rejects his argument, because in it there is a transition from the ideal to the real, from the subjective to the objective. What is conceived may

[7] "Sum. Theol.," Ip., qu. II, a. 1, ad. 2.

exist, but the fact that we conceive it does not prove that it does exist. In other words, the conclusion of the argument should be: Therefore, when we think of the Infinite we must think of It as existing. From this, however, it does not follow that the Infinite does exist, unless you begin with the supposition that there exists outside of the mind something greater than which nothing can be conceived; and, if you do this, you are guilty of a *petitio principii,* because you begin by presupposing the thing to be proved. This has been the general verdict concerning St. Anselm's argument, although there have been in every century some who maintained, and there are still many who maintain, that it is a valid proof. The necessity of repelling Kant's attacks against all metaphysical ideas caused men to consider more attentively the objective character of our mental conceptions, and it cannot be affirmed with absolute certainty that there is no possibility of making the argument valid by justifying the apparent transition from the ideal to the real.

However this may be, St. Anselm's title to fame and to our gratitude is not based on this argument alone. He rendered signal services to the cause of truth by determining the place which reason should occupy in investigating the truths of faith. These services mark an epoch, and bring out the most important features of the first period of Scholasticism.

First, he was called upon to refute the Nominalism of Roscelin (1009), which Anselm called a dialectical heresy, and which became an error in faith when Roscelin applied his theory to the mystery of the Trinity. Since he did not admit the existence of an idea common to many individuals, saying that universals were mere sounds of the voice—*flatus vocis*—Roscelin denied that there was one divine nature common to the three Persons of the Trinity. From this it followed that there were three Gods—three substances (*tres res*)—each possessing divine nature. In

this we see how easily mistakes which at first seem to be merely philosophical errors can be applied to the doctrines of faith.

Disputes about Universals.—Apart from this relation to faith, it must not be supposed for an instant that the dispute about the nature of universal ideas involved nothing more than a quibble about words. "The principles involved lie at the very foundation of human science, inasmuch as on its issue depends the possibility or impossibility of any demonstration whatsoever within the scope of knowledge accessible to man." The truth of this remark, made by Alzog in his "Church History," [8] is borne out by the history of philosophy. Idealism, Scepticism, modern Pantheism, Traditionalism, and Ontologism can all be traced to false conception about universals. Without entering deeply into this question, the dispute and the different opinions may be summed up as follows:

By the senses we perceive particular objects, such as John Smith, that tree, that horse, etc.; and the ideas, or representations of such objects in our minds are *particular ideas.* Besides these particular ideas, we have in our intellect ideas of something which is common to many individuals whereby they may be classed together, as when we speak of men, trees, etc. Individual beings are the direct objects of our senses; the universals are the direct objects of the intellect. We see, e.g., the individual men, trees, horses, etc., and the intellect forms the abstract idea of man, substance, life, cause, effect, roundness, whiteness, and the like.

Nominalists.—The Nominalists say there are no such ideas, and the distinctions just enumerated are mere sounds of the voice, corresponding to no external reality.

Conceptualists.—The Conceptualists found it easy to refute them, saying with truth: Words mean nothing unless they

[8] Tr. Pabisch, vol. II, p. 742.

signify a conception of the mind; hence the universal ideas exist as *concepts* by which the mind represents to itself all the individuals of a class, collectively and individually, but there is nothing in the individuals corresponding to the universal idea in the mind.

Realists.—The Realists say: Our conceptions would be false if there were not in the things represented something corresponding to the representation in the mind; hence humanity, and the nature of a tree, and whiteness, etc., really exist in individual men, trees, and white objects.

William of Champeaux.—William of Champeaux and his followers carried this conclusion too far, and held that the universals were the only realities; hence the universals actually exist in the individuals, which are only appearances or modifications of the universals.

The *true opinion,* defended by St. Anselm and adopted by all the great Scholastics, is a happy medium between Conceptualism and the exaggerated Realism of William of Champeaux. There is something in the individuals corresponding to the universal ideas in the mind; the universals are real, otherwise they could not be predicated of the individuals; it would not be true to say, e.g., Peter is a man, since the equivalent of that proposition is this: Peter has in him that which is represented in my mind by the concept of human nature. But, in the individuals, that nature is particular and incommunicable; in the mind, it is abstract and universal.[9] Hence the representation of a universal is not a mere thought of the mind, but the representation of a truth and of a reality; because a tree, e.g., has in it the nature of a tree, which nature is represented in my mind as abstract and universal—common to all trees. This question is fundamental in Metaphysics.

[9] St. Th., Ip., qu. 85, a. 2, ad. 2.

Kant.—Kant, who attacked Metaphysics in the eighteenth century, began by denying the objective reality of metaphysical concepts, and he thereby became the parent of a school of subjectivists, idealists, and sceptics, whose false theories affected, and still affect, all systems of philosophy that abandoned the teachings and the methods of the Scholastics.

Traditionalism and Ontologism.—Traditionalism and Ontologism would never have been accepted if some writers had not been too timid to assert boldly that there is a reality corresponding to our metaphysical or universal ideas.

St. Anselm's Works.—St. Anselm's best known works are his "Monologium" (Soliloquy) and the "Prosologium" (Continuation of Meditations). In these works he carefully distinguished faith from reason, and became a living and influential opponent of the rationalistic tendencies which had been excited by the writings of Scotus Erigena. He did more. In the two works just mentioned, and in his treatises on the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Procession of the Holy Ghost, on the Sin of Satan, on Original Sin, and "De Conceptu Virginali," he laid the foundations of scientific theology.

"Hitherto," writes Mother Drane, "ecclesiastical writers had, for the most part, been content to gather up and reproduce the traditionary wisdom of the Fathers; but now, when those traditions had become firmly established, a scientific superstructure was to be raised on that broad foundation, and the theology of the Church was to be built up into a compact and well-ordered system. This was the work of the scholastic theologians, of whom St. Anselm may be considered as the first." [10]

To appreciate fully the services that he rendered it must be borne in mind that he was as a pioneer in the field in which he labored. Philosophy had been cultivated in Greece and Rome.

[10] Drane, "Christian Schools and Scholars," (London, 1881), p. 313.

The Christian Apologists had used reason, had used it well, in defence of their faith. The Fathers of the Church were not strangers to the learning and literature of their times; they were fearless giants, ready at all times to compete with the most powerful adversaries of Christianity. But the defence and explanation of Christian truths had not attained the perfection of a compact and well-ordered system. Many timid souls feared to use what was good in the works of the pagan philosophers. The schoolmaster, however, was abroad in the land: scholars would be misled if their studies were not properly directed; there was need of a saint and scholar who could direct philosophical studies with the assurance that the use of reason would not be detrimental to the Christian faith. This St. Anselm did by his character and career, as well as by his writings, which inaugurated, in the Western Church, the systematic explanation and defence of Christian doctrine. He was as a pioneer in determining the true relations between faith and reason, showing that one could be at the same time a great philosopher and a good Christian. Later we shall see how St. Thomas perfected the system which St Anselm built upon the works of St. Augustine, Boethius and the early Christian Apologists.[11]

The work begun by St. Anselm was continued by Peter Lombard, Albertus Magnus, Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas of Aquin, to whom the world is indebted for those celebrated *Summæ*,[12] or *Manuals of Theology,* which served as the models of all subsequent theological treatises.

To St. Anselm is due the honor of inaugurating this important scientific movement, and for this reason he has been called the "Father of the Scholastics."

[11] See Leo XIII, Encycl. "Æterni Patris" in "Great Encyclicals of Leo XIII," pp. 36-48.

[12] See "Catholic Encyclopedia," s. v. *Summæ.*

CHAPTER II

DANGERS AND ABUSES OF SCHOLASTICISM—ABELARD (1079-1142)

There are shades and shadows, as well as bright and beautiful colors, in every good painting. This chapter will show some of the shadows in the picture of Scholasticism. The zest for learning, the new spirit, the new impulse and enthusiasm for philosophical studies, which animated the scholars of the Middle Ages, became dangerous when they were not carefully directed and moderated by sound principles. Errors crept in where the truth was sought by men who were easily puffed up with vain knowledge, and forgot to keep their eyes fixed on the guiding-star of Divine revelation.

One-sided representations are never fair or satisfactory. On the other hand, as the shades and shadows in a painting set forth the beautiful and brighter coloring, so also the wanderings, the faults, and the strange theories of erring Scholastics, give greater prominence to the learning, piety, and enlightened faith of the orthodox scholars. It is necessary that scandals should come, and woe unto them by whom they are caused!—but we know that God permits evils that greater good may be accomplished, and His power is so great, as St. Augustine remarks, that He can always direct evil results in such a manner that they will serve the accomplishment of some good purpose.

History not Feared.—Catholics do not fear a full and complete account of the errors into which some Scholastics were led, because the history of those errors proves three things which

they gladly record: (1) That there existed in those ages called "dark" a strong desire for learning and for the diffusion of knowledge; (2) that reason has limits beyond which it must not venture, and that pride dazzles and blinds the cultivated intellect which humility might have guided in the path of light and truth; (3) that Providence watches and rules over the Church, for when errors appeared the champions of the Faith were multiplied; and such champions were they that impartial historians are unanimous in giving them the verdict of superiority over the brilliant but erring brethren whom they opposed.

Any good qualities or perfections, challenging our admiration that appear in those who indulged in foolish subtleties or gave themselves up to the sophistical and rationalistic tendencies which marked the rise of Scholasticism, are to be found in all their excellence and abundance in the more serious philosophers and theologians, the great Scholastics. They knew how to use the new system without being dazed and misled by foolish theories and dangerous opinions which tried to find shelter under the name of Philosophy.

The great Doctors of those days knew that malice and prejudice would misconstrue their opposition to error, claiming—as the malicious of all times claim—that they were opposing knowledge and science. Their task was difficult and delicate, but so well did they accomplish it that we do not fear to make known the misfortunes and calamities of Scholasticism as well as its triumphs, because this knowledge will certainly lead to the conclusion: The great Scholastics opposed error in every form, but they loved the truth, and their writings furnish a standing proof of the fact that faith does not prevent the free and full exercise of reason within the limits of its own territory. What those limits are we now know, or ought to know. The dividing lines were not so clearly marked in the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and

twelfth centuries, and it is not surprising that some of the first travellers in the new fields went beyond the boundaries.

First Mistakes.—The first mistakes of the Scholastics were innocent and harmless—one might say, childish. Later errors were more serious, and endangered the faith, although, as we shall see, even in their strangest vagaries, they did not persistently and contumaciously defend errors after they were condemned, in which they differ essentially from out-and-out heretics.

The first Scholastics did not know for a long time what use should be made of the new branches of learning that were introduced into the schools, and they sought in learning amusement or pleasure rather than real advancement. In order to understand the condition of their minds it must be remembered that the influence of Charlemagne, and the patronage of all princes who desired to be considered wise and great, had created an extraordinary enthusiasm for learning.

The profession of Master was a title of admission to the courts of princes, and opened the gates to all honors and distinctions. Students, or scholars, were everywhere respected and were regarded as a privileged class. They were protected by special laws, and even the poorest peasants esteemed the honor of giving hospitality to poor students, journeying from the provinces to Paris, which soon became the great centre of learning.

The *Trivium* and the *Quadrivium* were still taught in the schools, but men were no longer content with the seven liberal arts; something more was required. The great Masters, such as Alcuin and Rabanus Maurus, began to write philosophical treatises, and in a short time both masters and pupils were fired with the ambition to become philosophers. This enthusiasm for philosophy continued to increase until it became a veritable craze, and a cry was raised against the new method by those who saw

in it a disregard for the advice of St. Paul against "philosophy and vain deceit." [13] Their objections were not altogether groundless, because many scholars neglected the study of the Fathers and of the Sacred Scriptures to devote themselves to philosophy. The art of reasoning was regarded as the most important branch of learning; the most expert disputants were considered the greatest scholars, and woe be unto the reputation of the old professors, however learned and venerable they may have been, if they could not make a display of logic in proving the propositions which they advanced, and in answering objections.

Scholastic Subtleties.—The Masters expounded their teachings in a series of propositions, which were spun out into useless and confusing distinctions and subdistinctions, and proved by a multiplicity of arguments which it was almost impossible to follow.

Sometimes, in order to give themselves an air of mystery and importance, they affected to imitate the epigrammatic style of Aristotle, and only the brighter students could detect the meaning of their words. There was the same multiplication of distinctions in proposing and answering objections, and the same studied obscurity of language, which was considered necessary in order to sharpen the wits of the students. "As two negatives are equal to an affirmative, professors were accustomed to introduce into their arguments such a number of negatives, that in order to reckon them up, and see in what sense their propositions were to be understood, the hearers had recourse to the device of dropping a bean at each negative, and reckoning up the sum total at the end of the lecture." [14] All this ingenuity—logical pyrotechnics, it might be called—was frequently wasted on questions that did not deserve the attention of serious men.

[13] Col., ii, 8.

[14] Drane, op. cit., p. 359.

Following the example of their masters, the students devoted themselves to subtleties and distinctions, and to the discussion of silly questions, wrangling in the streets, and sometimes passing the whole day in arguments. One of the arguments was this: Whether a pig that is driven to market by a man is held by the man, or by the cord fastened round the pig's leg! Such foolish amusements furnished a pretext for the accusation that the Scholastics spent their time in debating such questions as this: Can ten thousand angels dance at once on the point of a needle? "Foolish, but not dangerous," would be the verdict of a judge, if a Scholastic addicted to such methods and practices were brought before him under a decree *De lunatico inquirendo.*

There was no danger to the faith from such foolish practices, but the system entailed a loss of valuable time, which might have been given to more profitable exercises; and it failed to accomplish the one purpose at which it aimed, viz., the training of the minds of scholars. It must not be considered an essential part of Scholasticism; it was an unprofitable amusement, in which the first Scholastics lost much valuable time, and it was severely condemned by the Scholastics.

St. Thomas Aquinas tells us that he wrote his "Summa Theologica" to be a manual suitable for students, "because," said he, "I have observed that beginners in this sacred science are very much impeded by the multiplication of useless questions, articles, and arguments."[15] After they had amused themselves for a time with the new weapon of attack and defence, men naturally turned to something more serious, and we might have had the perfection of the Scholastic system long before the middle of the thirteenth century, were it not that a few turbulent and unruly spirits appeared from time to time to delay the progress of true philosophical knowledge.

[15] Summa Theol., Proem.

ABELARD.—The most turbulent and unruly of all these disturbing spirits was the celebrated and unfortunate Peter Abelard. We must not attach too much importance to the influence of this man. He was undoubtedly a brilliant scholar, but he was not a deep thinker. He was a meteor that shone for a while and dazzled men by its brilliancy, but he was not a sun giving light and warmth to the world. There would never have been so much noise made about him were it not for two things: (1) The romance of his relations with Heloïse excited a volume of prurient curiosity and maudlin sentimentality which filled the world of literature with a number of silly and pernicious books which should never have been written; (2) he openly defended rationalistic principles, and thus has been regarded by modern Rationalists as the champion of free thought; and freedom is something that charms and blinds men, insomuch that many crimes have been committed under the cover of that name.

The romance of Abelard's career must be passed over in silence. It is best to cover that chapter of history with a dark veil of mourning, so that those who wish to look upon it may know that they are to read a tale of shame and sorrow, both of which were keenly felt by the central characters in the romantic story. Abelard could never have been a St. Thomas, because he had not the depth of thought, made still deeper by serious study, which is necessarily required in a great philosopher or theologian. He might have been a Christian Cicero, had he given himself to literature and eloquence, for he was undoubtedly talented, eloquent, and skilled in the use of words, which he poured forth in a silver stream that charmed and delighted his hearers. Certainly he could have become a John of Salisbury, the friend of Thomas à Becket, who was considered the first scholar of his day, and who was a veritable "Junius" in the letters that he wrote against the logic-choppers, whom he designated as "Cornificians,"

because their new methods caused a neglect of polite letters. But a career that might have been useful as it was brilliant, was marred by pride and luxury, which, according to his own confession, were Abelard's dominant faults even before he came to Paris.

Forerunners of Abelard.—Before him, Scotus Erigena and Berengarius had been led into error by pride and ambition. Erigena, in his writings against Gotteschalk, became the forerunner of Calvinism by propounding his strange theories on Predestination. He was suspected, also, of denying the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist, a heresy which was openly taught by Berengarius, Archdeacon of Tours, who, jealous of the reputation of Lanfranc, and desiring to support his fallen credit, began to lecture on the Sacred Scripture, a subject which he had never studied. He explained the Scriptures, not according to the traditions of the Fathers, but after the whims of his own imagination, and soon fell into error with regard to infant baptism, marriage and the Eucharist.

In truth, Erigena and Berengarius were good dialecticians, but the shoemaker should stick to his last, and misfortune overtook these logicians when they began to dabble in theology, without any sufficient training in this branch of knowledge. Berengarius was merely an imitator of Erigena, and Erigena was the proto-parent of the Rationalistic spirit which found a champion in Abelard.

These three philosophers were so puffed up with vain knowledge and self-sufficiency that they thought themselves capable of understanding and explaining everything, and the attempt to explain everything is the distinguishing character of the Rationalism of the Middle Ages, of which Abelard was the principal type as well as the chief defender.

Abelard's Career.—The meteoric career of this erratic genius

extends from the latter half of the eleventh to the first half of the twelfth century (1079-1142). Born in 1079, at Palais, near Nantes, in Brittany, he had an exciting life from the time when he first attracted attention at Paris, by contradicting and refuting his professor, William of Champeaux, until his quiet death, full of repentance, in 1142. He himself has told us that the lack of courage led him to prefer the pursuit of learning to the profession of arms, and all things seemed to indicate that nature had destined him to be a scholar rather than a soldier. He was an apt pupil, quick, witty, attractive in his personal appearance, gentle and winning in his manners, and soon became a favorite with his professors and fellow-students. Not satisfied with the opportunities for learning offered in his own diocese, he came to Paris to hear the lectures of William of Champeaux, who was then teaching dialectics in that city. Abelard had manifested a decided liking for this branch of knowledge, and now he had the best opportunity the world could offer of perfecting himself in philosophy.

This was the turning-point in his career. Unfortunately for the young student his new surroundings were most favorable for nourishing that pride which was fast waxing strong in his bosom, and which subsequently caused his downfall. *Addiscentem oportet credere.* One who is to learn from another must have humility, and he must have confidence in the ability of his master, on whose authority he accepts truths until he can investigate them for himself.

Attacks His Masters.—Abelard was too proud to listen in humble silence, and to accept statements even on the authority of William of Champeaux, who was then at the height of his reputation. Whilst we condemn the pride of the disciple, we must admire his genius, for William was then propounding his own false theory—exaggerated Realism—on the nature of uni-

versal ideas. The master at first was amused and delighted with the subtle questions and objections proposed by his new pupil, but it soon became evident that Abelard aimed higher than the mere proposal of vexatious questions in the class-room. He intended to refute and confound his master. An easy undertaking, since he had merely to prove against William that universals are not actually inherent in the individuals of a class. William of Champeaux withdrew in confusion to the abbey of St. Victor, near Paris, and his successful rival founded a school of his own at Melun.

Abelard's health becoming impaired, he retired for a time into Brittany, then returned to Paris, where he again placed himself under his old master. Again they quarreled, and Abelard reopened his school, which was in 1115 transferred to Mont Ste Geneviève, near Paris, where his lectures were listened to by vast throngs of students who deserted the old master.

Up to this time Abelard could be reproached with nothing but pride and false philosophy. Authors do not agree in determining the name that should be given to his theory on the Universals. John of Salisbury wrote that he was a Nominalist, and this is not improbable, as his first master was Roscelin, founder of the Nominalists. Others assert, and their opinion is more commonly accepted, that he was the author of Conceptualism, which asserts that universal ideas are nothing more than conceptions of our mind, to which no objective realities correspond in the individuals. Such a proud spirit could not be content with philosophy alone, and when William of Champeaux was appointed bishop of Châlons, Abelard went to Laon, to hear the lectures of the celebrated Anselm of Laon.

Anselm of Laon.—Anselm was a teacher of the old school. For forty years had he labored in the cause of education, and he was saluted as *Doctor Doctorum*—the Doctor of Doctors—but

his methods did not please the brilliant and ambitious young philosopher.

Anselm was a quiet, one might say an easy-going professor, who was well acquainted with the doctrines of the Fathers and always walked in the beaten paths. We are told that he was stronger in exposition than in argument. "He could expound better than he could reply and he could state the doctrine of the Church more ably than he could defend it."[16] Who can picture to himself Abelard listening patiently to the lectures of this dear old professor, who did not care to give the new pupil an occasion to display his knowledge of Logic and his power of debate? "His learning," wrote the dissatisfied disciple, "was nothing but foliage without fruit; long custom, rather than any real merit, had acquired him a name. If you consulted him on any difficulty, you came away just as wise as you went. There was nothing but abundance of fine words, without a grain of sense or reason."[17] Abelard made up his mind that no master could teach him, and boldly declared that no master was necessary, since any man of ordinary gifts, with the help of the Fathers, could understand the Scriptures.

Abelard Lectures on Theology.—To make good his proud boast, he announced that, with only one day of preparation, he would explain the prophecy of Ezechiel. The admirers of Abelard were horrified; this was arrogance unheard of, for he had never followed a regular course of theology, and the system of graduation in the Middle Ages required all candidates to go through a long and severe course under an old and approved Doctor before they were authorized to teach. It was very unfortunate for Abelard that he succeeded so well in this rash undertaking. "My road is not the road of custom, but the road of

[16] Vaughan, "Life and Labours of St. Thomas of Aquin," vol. I, p. 158.
[17] Drane, op. cit., p. 348.

genius," was his answer to those who tried to dissuade him; and his genius was so great that his explanations of the prophecies astonished his hearers, wit and fluency of language supplying the defect of theological learning.

He now became fully convinced that he could explain everything; and this conviction explains the errors into which he fell when he undertook to teach theology. Through the influence of Anselm's supporters he was compelled to discontinue the lectures on Ezechiel. Returning to Paris in 1114, he was appointed to the chair of the cloister of Notre Dame, which had become vacant by the promotion to the episcopate of William of Champeaux, and he began to lecture on dialectics and theology with such success that students flocked to him from all parts of the world. "From Rome, in spite of mountains and robbers," writes Cardinal Newman, "from England, in spite of the sea; from Flanders and Germany; from Normandy and the remote districts of France; from Angers and Poitiers; from Navarre by the Pyrenees, and from Spain, besides the students of Paris itself."[18]

"Not only the students, but the very inhabitants of Paris," writes Vaughan, "paid him a homage which almost amounted to a sort of worship. . . . He could not pass to and from his lecture-hall without attracting the gaze of the Parisians. The boys who thronged the streets, on his approach, with his fine figure, his beautiful countenance, and his distinguished air, respectfully made way for him, and for a moment arrested their boisterous mirth to gaze in silence upon the most brilliant philosopher of the age. The inhabitants of the houses by which he passed left their occupations to watch him from their doors; and we are told that the women in the topmost stories of those lofty buildings would draw back the curtains of their windows, to catch a glimpse of the greatest of living orators—the gay and handsome cavalier,

[18] Newman, "Historical Sketches," III, 199.

as he swept by, surrounded by a swarm of his disciples, who were still under the spell of his spirit-stirring eloquence." [19] All those honors were showered on the brilliant young professor, who was consumed by pride and ambition.

His head was turned, and soon afterwards his heart was lost, when he was appointed to be the preceptor of Heloïse by her uncle, Canon Fulbert, who discovered, when it was too late, that the professor had abused the confidence reposed in him. After this disgraceful episode, which upset, and ever afterwards saddened the careers of the two guilty participants, Abelard entered the monastery of St. Denis as a monk, but he was not permitted to remain in solitude. Petitions were sent to him from the university students, requesting him to resume his lectures, and he returned to Paris.

Abelard Condemned.—Not content with his fame as an orator and a philosopher, he was ambitious to be regarded as a theologian. His treatment of the mysteries of the faith was irreverent. The Scholastics were jealous of his success, and joined with the Mystics in complaining of his irreverence. His book, entitled "Introduction to Theology," which was in reality a treatise on the Trinity, was condemned by the Council of Soissons, in 1121, and the author was confined in a monastery to do penance, being first required to recite the Athanasian Creed and to burn the book with his own hand before the assembled Fathers. Crushed, and disgusted with the world, he retired into a solitude near the city of Troyes, to which he gave the name of "The Paraclete," but he did not there find comfort or rest. His retreat was discovered, and crowds of students again flocked to him, building huts in the solitude, providing food for themselves and their master.

St. Bernard Appears.—We find Abelard again teaching at

[19] Vaughan, op. cit., vol. I, p. 160.

Paris in 1136, but in the meantime a strong and zealous champion of the faith had appeared in St. Bernard, whose attention had been directed to the errors of Abelard by William of Thierry and St. Norbert. Bernard reminded him that he confounded the teachings of faith with the principles of philosophy, and accused him of false doctrine on the important questions of the Trinity, the Person of the Mediator, the Holy Ghost, the Sacraments, and man's common redemption.[20] Abelard requested the Archbishop of Sens to give him the privilege of publicly defending himself. The request was granted, and St. Bernard was chosen to defend the Faith. His humility made him reluctant to accept the challenge, and well might he have feared the conflict, for Abelard had many followers and sympathizers; he was eloquent of speech, able in debate, and capable of diverting the minds of men from the questions at issue by his powers of ridicule and satire.

The day was appointed for the Synod, which was held at Sens in 1140. St. Bernard, whose humility yielded to the entreaties of the archbishop, read a list of heresies taken from Abelard's theology, and then called upon him to defend the propositions, to amend them, or to deny them. "I will not answer the Cistercian," replied Abelard; "I appeal from the Council to the See of Rome." Rome approved the action of the Council, and the sentence imposing silence on Abelard forever was confirmed by Innocent II. Turning back from Lyons when news of Rome's decision reached him, he was kindly received by Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny, who reconciled him with St. Bernard, and obtained for him absolution from the Pope.

Repentance and Death.—The proud spirit was finally subdued, and Abelard spent the remainder of his days in solitude and penance. He died an exemplary death, professing adherence

[20] Vaughan, op. cit., vol. I, p. 175.

to the orthodox faith, in the Priory of St. Marcellus, at Chalon-sur-Saône, on the 21st day of April, 1142, being sixty-three years of age.

Thus ended the career of one whose genius all must admire, whose misfortunes all deplore. He was a proud philosopher; he escapes the charge of heresy simply because he was not obstinate, always professing his willingness to submit to lawful authority, and he did submit in the end. Had he not been blinded by pride, his might have been an honored name in the annals of the Catholic Church.

Errors of Abelard.—The principal errors which he defended were the following: (1) In philosophy he defended *Conceptualism,* which has been sufficiently explained, and *Optimism,* a theory which was afterwards adopted by Leibnitz. This system teaches that God, in creating, was bound to choose the best and most perfect; that God was not free in creating the world, and that it would be impossible to create a world more perfect than the present; (2) his greatest mistakes were made concerning the relation of philosophy to revelation. Being puffed up with vain knowledge he acknowledged no distinction between the truths of faith and truths manifested by the light of reason, and pretended that there was no mystery, even the Trinity, that could not be explained by reason. This is the fundamental and most important of all his errors; all others spring from this or cluster around it. Reason was the shrine at which he worshipped. He was profuse in his praises of philosophy and of the philosophers, especially of Plato and Aristotle, and when his proud spirit was finally subdued, he confessed with humility and deep regret that he had set more store on being a second Aristotle than on being a follower of Jesus Christ. From this exaggeration of the claims of reason arose that spirit of doubt and scepticism which pervades all his writings on subjects pertaining to the Faith. Not

satisfied with proclaiming, like St. Paul, the necessity of rendering to God a "reasonable service," [21] he pretended that a philosopher should begin by doubting all the truths of revelation, and maintained that faith proceeds from scientific investigation.

Faith rests on the authority of Almighty God; reason's duty consists in proving that God has spoken in revelations; whoever attempts to prove the mysteries of faith by reason will either reject revelation altogether, or will end by doubting all the truths of faith. This is what happened to Abelard. Attempting to prove all dogmatic truths by reason he did not, and could not, attain to absolute certainty, but only to probability, which led to doubt. In his work, "Sic et non" (The Yes and No, or the Affirmative and the Negative), he took various propositions of faith and morals, and placed by the side of them texts of Scripture and passages from the Fathers telling for and against each, and apparently contradictory of one another, without attempting to reconcile them.

It is easy enough to raise doubts and propose objections; it is easier to tear down than to build. Abelard had never studied theology; hence he was not capable of giving solid instruction in a scientific treatise on the mysteries of faith; but he was brilliant and fluent, and he could propose doubts, without being able to offer a satisfactory solution. In this way he came to be regarded as the parent of a Scepticism which he never really intended to foster, and modern Sceptics and Rationalists have been too hasty in choosing him as their great champion.

Justice to Abelard and the rights of truth, demand that we note a marked distinction between the rationalistic spirit of the Middle Ages and the Rationalism of later times. Abelard exaggerated the claims of reason, but he continued to believe in the mysteries of faith. Modern Rationalism says: "What cannot

[21] Rom., xii, 1.

be understood must be rejected." Abelard said: "I believe in the mysteries, e.g., of the Trinity and of the Eucharist, but I believe also that I can explain them." Certainly there is a vast difference between saying: "I believe and I can explain," and "I will not believe because I cannot explain." Abelard did not intend in his "Sic et Non" to attack any dogma of the faith; his purpose was to excite rational doubts, which would in the end have resulted in a more intelligent faith; for, "doubt leads to inquiry, and inquiry leads to truth." Had he been trained in theology as he was skillful in logic he would have acquired fame as an expounder and defender of the faith that was in him. In other words, he was a misguided, proud philosopher, who attempted to explain the mysteries of faith by the light of reason, and succeeded only in exciting doubts.

Good Resulting from Abelard's Career.—We deplore his errors and his misfortunes, yet we recognize the fact that his stormy career had one beneficial effect on the theological studies of the Middle Ages. His criticisms caused the writers on theology to be more systematic in their expositions of Catholic truth, more careful and more patient in solving doubts and objections to the mysteries of faith. Opposition to Abelard's rationalistic spirit gave to the world the saintly mystics of the School of St. Victor. Seeing the errors into which Abelard was led by exaggerating the claims of reason, these mystics proclaimed that charity was more than mere learning, and the principle that animated them was expressed in the well-known saying of a well-known mystic of the fifteenth century: "It is better to feel compunction than to know its definition." On the other hand, the claims of reason were not to be neglected; they were recognized and applied to the science of the faith by the Scholastic writers of the thirteenth century, for whom Abelard and the Mystics prepared the way.

CHAPTER III

THE EXPERIMENTAL SCIENCES—ALBERTUS MAGNUS—ROGER BACON

Very interesting in the history of philosophy in the Middle Ages is the chapter which treats of the condition of the experimental sciences amongst the Schoolmen. The mere mention of this subject opens up a wide field of investigations, and before entering this field a few remarks should be made.

Cultivation of Experimental Sciences Not the Highest Perfection.—In the first place, it must not be supposed that proficiency in the physical and experimental sciences is the highest standard of perfection. Nature is a book wherein we should study the wondrous works of the Creator; to leave this book unopened would be culpable negligence. We must cultivate and develop all our faculties, yet it must be borne in mind that the highest perfection of man consists in the exercise of his highest faculties on their highest objects. Now, we have faculties that are brought into use by observation, experiment, and analysis; and we have also the higher faculty of intelligence and reason. All of these faculties can be exercised in the study of nature, if from nature we ascend to nature's God; but, be it remarked once for all, the observation, classification, and analysis of natural phenomena do not constitute the highest form of intellectual activity, especially if the devotees of this branch of knowledge studiously exclude from their investigations all that pertains to Metaphysics, Ethics and God. Success in the experimental sciences is desirable; it is a perfection and a sign of progress; but it is not the highest form

of progress and perfection, because there are higher and nobler objects on which the God-given faculties of our minds can be exercised. In other words—if we must make odious comparisons—Plato was greater than Benjamin Franklin or Robert Fulton; St. Thomas Aquinas was greater than Edison; the author of a good catechism, or manual of religious instruction, is greater than the inventor of safety-matches.

It may be objected that such comparisons should not be made. These men were all great, each in his own sphere, and they cannot be compared in relation to perfections pertaining to different orders and spheres. Well said; and the comparison shall not be made provided men refrain from speaking and acting as if the sum total of perfection were to be found in the cultivation of the experimental sciences, as if no man is entitled to be considered enlightened and learned unless he is an expert on suspension bridges and the latest patterns of the chainless bicycle. We must do these things and not omit those. We must guard against being carried away in the whirlwind of our busy, practical times, when we hear much in praise of inventors and those who make progress in the applied sciences, whilst there is little said in commendation of those who devote themselves to higher and nobler pursuits. Very few dare to formulate these principles, proposing them as a theory or system, yet any intelligent observer knows that they are like an under-current affecting the stream of public opinion in our days. We must distinguish carefully between the dignity and the necessity or usefulness of certain kinds of knowledge. The practical value of a science or of sciences will be in proportion to the needs of mankind at certain epochs. Most assuredly it would be the height of folly to claim that the educated men of America, France and England should devote their time and talents principally to philosophical speculations at the present time, when the work in chemical laboratories may decide the fate

of a liberty-loving and knowledge-loving world. Yet, who would not prefer the glory of an Augustine, a Thomas, even a Nicholas of Cusa, to the plaudits showered upon the inventors of liquid fire, the gas-mask, the depth bomb or the battling aeroplane?

And in the peace-councils following the war, men of philosophic thought, historians, Christian statesmen and legislators, Christian gentlemen and scholars will be more valuable for the future peace and happiness of the world than the most ingenious inventors of death-dealing instruments. Woodrow Wilson is not a "world-beater" in the applied sciences, but he is recognized as a world-leader. From these considerations thoughtful men can draw their own conclusions, giving due value to the speculative and to the applied sciences.

Church not Opposed to Science.—In the next place it is to be observed that whoever wishes to make an impartial study of the subject which we are considering must banish forever from his mind the thought that the Catholic Church is opposed to knowledge or enlightenment of any kind, or that she does not desire or favor the progress of science. How such a notion originated is not easily explained. She has always, indeed, taught that preparation for a happy eternity is more important than the leading of easy and comfortable lives; hence the knowledge of those things that lead to Heaven is of more value than anything pertaining to earthly perfection. In the ages of faith men were more anxious to lead good lives than to make progress in worldly affairs, and in this way it came to pass that they did not devote themselves to the natural sciences as much as men who have no thought of religion and no solicitude for the hereafter. If this be opposition to the progress of science, then all right-minded believers must plead guilty of the crime with which the Church is charged.

The Church, too, frequently has reminded scientists that they

should confine themselves to their own field of investigation; that they should not speak and act as if there were no light in Heaven or on earth except the light of their little lamps. She has told them that they have no right to begin their investigations with the supposition that there is no God, that there is no such thing as revelation, that the first chapter of Genesis contains a false account of the creation of the world. She has also told them that they must not jump at conclusions in the course of their investigations; but those words of advice and caution cannot be construed into opposition to the progress of science. They have never been understood in this sense by her own children, and assuredly they ought to know her intentions better than outsiders.

That the Church gladly welcomes any light that science may afford to aid in the explanation and defence of revealed truth is well-known to all who read the theological or scriptural treatises of Catholic writers. Our faith is not built on the claims of science; we believe certain truths, not because science teaches them, but because they have been revealed by the Author of all truth and of all science. We know, however, that the Faith has nothing to fear from the claims of science; hence the Church favors the most complete scientific investigation, provided it be conducted in the proper spirit, with the desire of arriving at the truth.

Pius IX.—Pius IX, in various allocutions and letters, especially in those addressed to the bishops and theologians of Germany, fully recognized the importance of scientific investigation, provided science did not go beyond its own sphere. He foreshadowed the definitions of the Vatican Council on the relations of reason to faith; and we defy our adversaries to find in the decrees of that Council a single word in condemnation of any just claim of science.

Leo XIII.—It is well-known that Leo XIII, in many of his official acts, particularly in his Encyclical on the Restoration of Christian Philosophy, and his letters on the study of history and of the Sacred Scriptures, encouraged and exhorted Catholics to apply themselves to the study of the sciences, because the Faith has nothing to fear and men might gain much from the light of scientific investigations.

Let us pass over those words of advice and instruction, because some might say: These are recent acts; they are the words of progressive pontiffs; but it was not always thus, and the attitude of Rome was not always favorable to the natural sciences. Now, we know that Rome never changes in matters of faith or doctrine. But, in order to show that there is absolutely no ground for claiming that the Church was at any time opposed to scientific investigation, let us turn to the spectacle presented in the Middle Ages.

Thirteenth Century.—What do we find in the thirteenth century, when the influence of the Church was paramount? We find that the greatest theologians of those days were also the most skillful scientists. Albertus Magnus and Roger Bacon are justly classed amongst the greatest scientists of any age; and it must not be supposed that they stand alone amongst the churchmen who were proficient in the natural sciences. They are the best-known and most illustrious representatives of a school of men who strove to acquire eminence in all branches of knowledge. The history of those schools and of those men stands before the world as a continual refutation of the calumnious assertion that the Church is opposed to the cultivation of the natural sciences.[22]

Time Necessary for Proficiency in Natural Sciences.—In forming an estimate of their skill and proficiency we must bear

[22] Walsh, "The Popes and Science" (New York, 1911).

in mind that the science of nature, like every other branch of human knowledge, was subject to the general law of evolution, or gradual development. There was the time of incipiency, of growth and progress before the time of perfection. Absolute perfection in this branch of knowledge will never be attained by man, because nature has many secrets which we shall never know; and it would be unfair to demand of men who lived six centuries ago that perfection of science which is easily attained by the specialists of our day. Just think of the wondrous changes wrought by the inventions and discoveries of scientists during the nineteenth century! We do not blame men of the eighteenth century, or consider them ignorant, because they did not ride in automobiles or in Pullman cars lighted by electricity. We do not consider ourselves unprogressive because we cannot journey in twenty-four hours from New York to London in an airship. In like manner we should not condemn men of the Middle Ages if they fall short of the twentieth century standard of perfection in the natural sciences. We can require of them only a relative perfection, such proficiency as they could have attained, considering the time when they lived and the opportunities afforded them of making progress in the branches which depend so much on observation and experiment.

Two Great Medieval Scientists.—Judged by this standard the achievements of Albertus Magnus and Roger Bacon are simply marvellous; and it is not surprising that they were regarded with a feeling akin to superstition whilst they were living, or that legends were intermingled with the true accounts of their scientific experiments and accomplishments. The only serious criticism directed against them consisted in saying that they exaggerated the importance of philosophy and the natural sciences to the detriment of theological studies. Here the critics are guilty of exaggeration.

Albertus Magnus was a great theologian, and he it was who moulded the mind of the greatest of all theologians, St. Thomas of Aquin. According to the opinion of some writers, Roger Bacon did become so absorbed in the pursuit of natural science as to neglect certain branches of theology; but we must remember that only men of exceptional genius can become specialists in several branches. In truth, he probably gave more time than his critics to the study of theology; and, even if he were too enthusiastic in his favorite study, we should be willing to pardon the fault, as we are inclined to rejoice rather than grieve over his successful pursuit of the natural sciences.

These two remarkable men were contemporaries. Albertus was born in 1193 (according to some authorities in 1206), and died in 1280. Bacon was born in 1214 and died in 1294. They were Christian scientists in the true sense of the word, and they are entitled to the gratitude of the world for proving by their careers that a *good Christian can be a great scientist.* The question was as actual in the thirteenth century as it is to-day, with this difference, that the theories then advanced in the name of science were more primitive, and, perhaps more unreasonable, than modern scientific theories, though one needs strong faith to accept without doubting all that now passes under the name of science.

Natural science, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, was looked upon with suspicion because it was presented under the garb of Arabian Aristotelianism. Students of the universities seized with avidity everything that was presented in the name of science; sound judgment forbade the acceptance of all the foolish assertions of the alchemists and astrologers; the uninitiated either became superstitious or looked upon the philosophers as harmless dreamers; the educated scented danger to the faith from the writings of a pagan philosopher explained by the unbelieving Moors; the study of Aristotle's Physics was forbidden because

false and dangerous systems were based upon the Stagyrite's works. The world of students was thrown into confusion, and a master-mind was needed to establish order in the chaos of conflicting opinions and tendencies.

Albert the Great.—That master-mind was Albertus Magnus, who is eulogized in an old Belgian Chronicle as, *Magnus in magia, major in philosophia, maximus in theologia* i.e., "Great in magic [natural sciences], greater in philosophy, greatest in theology"). He led the way for St. Thomas, who walked in the footsteps of his master when he resolved to Christianize philosophy and systematize theology, accepting what was true and rejecting what was false in the writings of Aristotle. In variety and extent of knowledge, and in soundness of judgment, the disciple surpassed the master, but Albert was the leader, and his first works were commentaries on the philosophy of Aristotle, which embraced the whole range of the natural sciences.

Albert the Great is undoubtedly one of the greatest men that ever lived. The history of his career as a student at Paris, Padua, and Bologna, as a Dominican friar, and as professor at Hildesheim, Freiburg, Ratisbon, Strasburg, Paris and Cologne, as Provincial of his Order, and as Bishop of Ratisbon, would lead one to think that the active duties of the offices which he filled and the long journeys which he was compelled to make in those days of slow travelling, would leave him no time for writing; yet he has left "twenty-one folio volumes upon every then known subject that can be put under logic, metaphysics, psychology, natural science, ethics, theology, chemistry, botany, and the rest." [23] Commentaries on almost all the works of Aristotle; Natural Philosophy; Commentaries on Denis the Areopagite; Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard; Summa Theologica, or Manual of Theology—these are the headings under

[23] Vaughan, "Life and Labours of St. Thomas of Aquin., vol. I, p. 122.

which we may classify the writings of the man who has merited the title of *Doctor Universalis,* Universal Doctor.

Albert's Scientific Knowledge.—We are dealing with his treatment of the natural sciences, and let us first separate true history from the legends that have been woven around his name. It is certain that he was remarkable as a botanist, chemist, geographer, geologist, mechanic, and anatomist.

"Albertus Magnus," writes Humboldt in his "Cosmos," was equally active and influential in promoting the study of natural science and of the Aristotelian philosophy. . . . His works contain some exceedingly acute remarks on the organic structure and physiology of plants. One of his works, bearing the title of 'Liber Cosmographicus de Natura Locorum,' is a species of physical geography. I have found in it considerations on the dependence of temperature concurrently with latitude and elevation, and on the effect of different angles of incidence of the sun's rays in heating the ground, which have excited my surprise." Some writers assert that Albert could make gunpowder, and that as a geographer he anticipated the discovery of America.[24] "The Jews looked upon his writings and discoveries with respect. A certain Abraham translated into Arabic his *Summa* of natural philosophy; while the learned Jewish physician, Portaleone (1542-1612), pays a handsome compliment to Albert's treatment of 'precious stones.' "[25] Augusta Theodosia Drane (Mother Raphael, O.S.D.), in her work on "Christian Schools and Scholars" (London, 1881), calls attention to a few of the scientific views of Albert which show how much he owed to his own sagacious observation of natural phenomena, and how far he was in advance of his age.

"He decides that the Milky Way is nothing but a vast as-

[24] Vaughan, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 129-130.

[25] *Idem,* op. cit.

semblage of stars, but supposes, naturally enough, that they occupy the orbit which receives the light of the sun. The figures visible on the moon's disk are not, he says, as has hitherto been supposed, reflections of the seas and mountains of the earth, but configurations of her own surface. He notices, in order to correct it, the assertion of Aristotle that lunar rainbows appear only twice in fifty years. 'I myself,' he says, 'have observed two in a single year.' He has something to say on the refraction of the solar ray, notices certain crystals which have a power of refraction, and remarks that none of the ancients, and few moderns, were acquainted with the properties of mirrors. In his tenth book, wherein he catalogues and describes all the trees, plants, and herbs known in his time, he observes, 'all that is here set down is the result of our own experience, or has been borrowed from authors whom we know to have written what their personal experience has confirmed; for in these matters experience alone can give certainty.' (*Experimentum solum certificat de talibus.*) Such an expression, which might have proceeded from the pen of Bacon, argues in itself a prodigious scientific progress, and shows that the medieval friar was on the track so successfully pursued by modern natural philosophy. He had fairly shaken off the shackles which had hitherto tied up discovery, and was the slave neither of Pliny nor of Aristotle.

"He treats as fabulous the commonly received idea in which Bede had acquiesced, that the region of the earth south of the equator was uninhabitable, and considers that, from the equator to the south pole, the earth was not only habitable, but, in all probability, actually inhabited, except directly at the poles, where he imagines the cold to be excessive. If there are any animals there, he says, they must have thick skins to defend them from the rigour of the climate, and are probably of a *white color*. The intensity of cold, however, is tempered by the action of the sea.

He describes the antipodes and the countries they comprise, and divides the climate of the earth into seven zones. He smiles with a scholar's freedom at the simplicity of those who suppose that persons living at the opposite extreme of the earth must fall off—an opinion which can only arise out of the grossest ignorance—'for, when we speak of the *lower* hemisphere, this must be understood merely as relative to ourselves.' It is as a geographer that Albert's superiority to the writers of his own time chiefly appears. Bearing in mind the astonishing ignorance which then prevailed on this subject, it is truly admirable to find him correctly tracing the chief mountain chains of Europe, with the rivers which take their source in each, remarking on portions of coast which have in later times been submerged by the ocean, and islands which have been raised, by volcanic action, above the level of the sea, noticing the modification of climate caused by mountains, seas, and forests; and the divisions of the human race, whose differences he ascribes to the effect of the countries they inhabit. In speaking of the British Isles, he alludes to the commonly received idea that another distant island, called Tile or Thule, existed far in the Western Ocean, uninhabitable by reason of its frightful climate, but which, he says, has perhaps not yet been visited by men. He was acquainted with the sleep of plants; with the periodical opening and closing of blossoms; with the diminution of sap during evaporation from the cuticle of the leaves, and with the influence of the distribution of the bundles of vessels on the folial indentations.[25] His minute observations on the forms and variety of plants indicate an exquisite sense of floral beauty. He distinguishes the star from the bell flower, tells us that a red rose will turn white when submitted to the vapour of sulphur, and makes some very sagacious observations on the subject of germination. The extraordinary erudition and

[25] Humboldt, "Cosmos," vol. II, p. 247.

originality of this treatise has drawn from M. Meyer the following comment: 'No botanist who lived before Albert can be compared to him, unless it be Theophrastus, with whom he was not acquainted; after him none has painted nature in such living colours, or studied it so profoundly, until the time of Conrad, Gesner, and Cesalpini. All honour, then, to the man who made such astonishing progress in the science of nature as to find no one, I will not say to surpass, but even to equal him, for the space of three centuries.' . . . It was not extraordinary that one who had so deeply studied nature, and had mastered so many of her secrets, should by his wondering contemporaries have been judged to have owed his marvellous knowledge to a supernatural source, or that his mechanical contrivances, his knowledge of the power of mirrors, and his production of a winter garden, or hothouse, where, on the feast of the Epiphany, 1249, he exhibited to William of Holland, king of the Romans, plants and trees in full blossom, should have subjected him in the mind of the vulgar to the suspicion of sorcery."

Legends about Albert.—From the legends associated with the name of Albert we may select three as worthy of mention:

(1) There is the popular tradition that Albert furnished the plans for the Cathedral of Cologne. Dr. Sighart,[27] an enthusiastic admirer of the great man, says that it is impossible to attribute to him the design of the Cologne basilica. Probably, he was invited to take part in the deliberations with regard to the edifice, and may have spoken in favor of the wonders he had seen in Paris, and of the Gothic style of architecture, which had been adopted in almost all the Dominican churches; but he had no opportunity to gain such an insight into the artistic and practical details of architecture as was possessed by the author of Cologne's great cathedral. Vaughan says "As an architect he gave plans for

[27] Sighart, "Albert the Great; His Life and Scholastic Labors" (London, 1876).

several churches; and the first design of the stately Cathedral of Cologne is said to have been copied from his drawings."[28]

(2) Another legend relates to an automaton that he labored thirty years to produce, which he succeeded in making to speak. St. Thomas, the legend says, came unawares upon it in the workshop of Albert, and was so startled that he seized a stick, and shrieking *Salve! Salve!* smashed the fearful monster to pieces, thinking it to be some cruel savage who was about to attempt his life. The truth is this: Albert could manufacture automata, which were made to move by means of mercury, after the manner of Chinese mannikins and tumbling-toys; and it is possible that he may have constructed small mechanical figures capable of emitting sounds, for he speaks of these inventions as things then known. "The Barbiton," he says, "is a figure with a long beard, from the mouth of which comes a tube, with a bellows attached to one side. It is set in motion by the introduction of air into the tube, so that the bearded mannikin appears to play the flute." Albert probably manufactured an automaton of this kind, capable of moving and uttering the word *Salve,* so that the legend about St. Thomas's vigorous application of the stick is founded upon a historical fact.

(3) Finally, wonderful things are told of Albert's *magic cup,* which is still preserved in the museum of Cologne. "It is," writes Dr. Sighart, "an ordinary cup, the recess of which is formed of two plates of metal, the upper part being perforated. Antimony (antimonium) was placed between the plates. When water was poured into it, a portion of the antimony slowly dissolved, and the beverage had a laxative effect. If wine, the dissolution was greater, and the liquid excited vomiting. Albert thus possessed a universal medicine; he could employ the two principal processes of the medical art, and there is no doubt that by

[28] Vaughan, op. cit., vol. I, p. 130.

this means he wrought the cure of many sick persons." [29] Sighart adds that most of the convents in Bavaria possessed, until recent times, cups of this description.

It is not surprising, then, that Albert should have been regarded by the common people as a magician or sorcerer, just as in our times people wondered whether Herman and Kellar possessed any secret methods of doing their remarkable "tricks." "But it is certainly surprising," writes Mother Drane, "that such charges should be reproduced by modern critics, who, it might have been thought, would have condemned the very belief in witchcraft as a medieval superstition. The more so as Albert devotes no inconsiderable portion of his pages to the exposure and refutation of those forbidden arts, which he will not allow to be reckoned among the sciences, such as geomancy, chiromancy, and a formidable list of other branches of magic." [30]

Roger Bacon.—The Franciscan, Roger Bacon, was a contemporary of Albertus Magnus, and devoted himself more exclusively than the *Doctor Universalis* to the natural sciences. Albert is greater as a metaphysician and theologian; Bacon merited the title of *Doctor Mirabilis* (Wonderful Doctor), by the success of his studies and experiments in nature. He cannot justly be regarded as the founder of the experimental school of philosophy, since all good philosophers recognized the importance of observation and experiment as a means of arriving at the knowledge of the truth, and before his time many had distinguished themselves by the acuteness of their observations and the success of their experiments. Bacon urged more earnestly than any of his predecessors or contemporaries the necessity of the experimental method, and has been reproached with the neglect of philosophy and theology. Let us remember that he

[29] Sighart, op. cit.
[30] Drane, op. cit., p. 421.

had received the degree of Doctor in Theology from the University of Paris. Returning to Oxford, he spent forty years of his life in studying and lecturing on the natural sciences. He thus became a specialist, and we must not be surprised to find him enthusiastic and exaggerated in his devotion to this branch of study. Humboldt says that he was the most important cultivator of the natural sciences who appeared during the Middle Ages.

Writings of Bacon.—His writings included treatises on optics (then called perspective), mathematics, chemistry, arithmetic, astronomy, the tides, and the reformation of the calendar. His skill in the use of optical and mechanical instruments caused him to be regarded by many as a sorcerer. He was acquainted with the properties of mirrors, knew the powers of steam and gunpowder, knew something about the microscope, and possessed an instrument very much like our telescope. He claimed for this tube that it would make the most distant object appear near, that it would make stars appear at will, and, what is more, that it had the power of beholding future events. This was an exaggeration, to say the least, unless we suppose that the wonderful friar, with the aid of his tube, could foretell storms and hot and cold waves, as our weather bureau does.

Devotion to his favorite science led Bacon into the wild theories of the alchemists. "He believed in the possibility of contriving lamps that should burn forever, magic crystals, the elixir of life, and the philosopher's stone, and wrote treatises on the two last-named subjects." [31]

Notwithstanding these errors, which are excusable in one who lived six hundred years ago, Montalembert wrote of Bacon: "He rehabilitated and sanctified the study of nature; he classified all the sciences, and foresaw (if he did not accomplish), the greatest discoveries of modern times." Suspension bridges

[31] Drane, op. cit., p. 487.

(*Pontes ultra flumina, sine columna vel aliquio sustentaculo*), diving-bells and flying machines, were amongst the possibilities he predicted. He did not know Santos-Dumont, Curtiss, or the Wright brothers, but he wrote that it was possible to make a contrivance, by which a man, sitting in the middle of an airship, could, by turning a crank, move artificial wings, and sail through the air like a bird. (*Instrumenta volandi, ut homo, sedens in medio instrumenti, revolvens aliquod instrumentum, per quod alæ artificialiter compositæ ærem verberant, ad modum avis volant.*)

We are not told whether it was the lack of a ship, Bacon's own prudence, or the vigilance of his superiors, that prevented him from "going up in the air"; but we are glad that he did not experiment too much with his flying machine; otherwise his fate would have been worse than that of Albertus Magnus' automaton, which was broken to pieces by St. Thomas.

Bacon was also a philologist, and, in his enthusiasm for the study of the languages, he held that all Christians should know the Scriptures thoroughly, and be able to consult the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. When it was objected that this was not possible, he replied that he had invented a universal grammar, with the aid of which he could teach any man Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Arabic in a few days. He also boasted that he could teach the whole course of arithmetic and geometry in a week. These are exaggerations which must be attributed to his enthusiasm and to the facility with which he himself acquired knowledge. They will be pardoned in one who has done so much to prove that the Middle Ages were far from being buried in the darkness of ignorance and superstition.

In the course of these studies mention is made of men who were eminent in learning in every age from the beginning of the ninth to the end of the thirteenth century. Some of them

were the greatest and most learned men that the world ever knew; some were led into fanciful theories and dangerous errors; but the history of these men and of their times gives evidence of a desire for knowledge and of intellectual activity that has never been surpassed, even in our own days of boasted enlightenments! Why, then, should those centuries be called the "dark ages"? In the highest branches of human knowledge, sound philosophy and intelligent theology, the Scholastics are still the leaders, and their works are to this day the best models we possess of true science.

In the experimental sciences Albertus Magnus and Roger Bacon were far in advance of their times, and many of their opinions are regarded with respectful admiration by the scientists of to-day. In the name of truth, then, and in the name of all that is fair and decent, let men cease to say or to insinuate that the Church is opposed to science or to true knowledge of any kind. Believers may search and investigate nature as much as they will, provided they do not try to shut out the light which Heaven gives to guide them in their investigations; and their faith will be strengthened. Unbelievers, too, may search as they will. Their investigations alone may not lead them to the faith, which is based on the word of God, but we can assure them that in all their investigations they will never find the least foundation for opposition to revelation; for revelation is the light of God, and there can be no opposition between the light of science and the light of God. Both dispel darkness, and both should always point out the way that leads to the bright, eternal Light of Lights.

CHAPTER IV

CONDITION OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY—WHAT ST. THOMAS FOUND AT PARIS

ST. THOMAS GOES TO PARIS.—In the year 1245, sometime between Easter and midsummer, two travellers might have been seen trudging patiently and cheerfully along one of the many roads, not so numerous, indeed, then as now, but more picturesque in the grandeur of their natural beauty, which led out from the city of Cologne. They travelled on foot, carried no provisions, and had "neither purse nor scrip." [32] They were mendicant friars, journeying in truly apostolic fashion from Cologne to Paris, in obedience to the commands of the general chapter of the Order of St. Dominic, which was held that year at Cologne.

In those days it was not uncommon to see religious thus journeying from place to place, and our two friars would not have attracted special attention unless, perhaps, something of the nobility and greatness and sanctity of their souls manifested itself in their countenances. Historians, however, would give much to know what were their thoughts and what words were exchanged between them as they journeyed along, interrupting their prayers and meditations to converse about the mission on which they were sent and the plans of their superiors, which they were preparing to execute. *Cognitio singularium non perficit intellectum,* is a principle laid down by St. Thomas.[33] History is

[32] St. Luke, x, 4.

[33] St. Th., 1 p. qu. 12, art. 8, ad. 4.

useless unless it teach something: the knowledge of what those who have gone before us said or did is worthless, unless it fill our minds with principles which will serve as beacon-lights, pointing out the efforts, the dangers, the successes of the past, throwing light on the paths in which we must walk in the future. Ordinarily the sayings and doings of others are of no value, except in as far as they furnish subjects of amusement or occupation for those who might be doing something worse if they were not engaged in idle gossip; but the thoughts and sayings and the deeds of those who were truly great, and who exercised a salutary influence on their contemporaries and on future ages, must be carefully studied by all who wish to understand the philosophy of history. Of our two travelling friars it may be said without exaggeration that they were starting on a mission which was to change the face of the world; not indeed by conquests gained with the sword, but by triumphs of the pen, which they were to wield so assiduously and so mightily in the service of God and religion.

Albertus Magnus and St. Thomas Practical Men.—The two travelling friars were Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas. We often think and speak of the saints and of great men as if they were like wax figures or automata, or men who lived and moved in a dream-land, forgetting that in reality they were warm-hearted, practical men. They were not angels, although the sublimity of their thoughts and the purity of their lives made them angelic, and this is in a special manner true of St. Thomas. They were *men,* living in the world, with temptations to overcome and duties to face. They did not always move about as if they were in a trance; they were not, either by virtue of necessity or by necessity of virtue, unpractical. They lived, indeed, in a sphere elevated above that occupied by the generality of mankind. Owing to the elevation in which they were placed they could survey

with calmness and with cool, unbiased judgment, the strifes and turmoils that raged beneath them; but we must not forget that they were intelligent, and warm-hearted men; not indeed in the sense that they yielded to the vices or weaknesses which often prove but too forcibly the reality of our tainted nature, but in the sense that they did not go through the world stupidly or with their eyes closed. They were alive to the times in which they lived, being ready to recognize the good and to apply a remedy to the evils which came under their intelligent observation.

There is no reason, then, for supposing that Bl. Albert and St. Thomas journeyed from Cologne to Paris without conferring together in regard to their plans for the future. Moreover, they had serious matters to discuss. Humility is not stupidity, and they would have been stupid if they did not understand that the superiors of their Order had something important in view when the general chapter, held at Cologne in 1245, decreed that Albert should be sent to Paris to take the Doctor's cap and that he was to be accompanied by his young disciple, Thomas of Aquin, whom the General of the Order had brought all the way from Naples to Cologne that he might be trained under the care of one who was generally known as "the great professor." They knew that the Order of St. Dominic from its very beginning had been devoted to the study of the sacred sciences. Albert himself had been sent to Paris in the year 1228 "to look thoroughly into the studies and to put them on a footing to meet the requirements of the age." [34] Many students and professors of the university had joined the new institution, and the general chapters each year made new regulations to perfect the system of studies and of graduation which was to produce such excellent results in the near and in the distant future. They had too much humility to consider themselves more important than other professors and

[34] Vaughan, op. cit., vol. I, p. 121.

students of the order, but they must have felt that the trust which the order reposed in them carried with it a responsibility which had not been imposed upon the others. Bl. Albert and St. Thomas had learned to know each other at Cologne, and a strong, saintly affection had sprung up between the master and his favorite disciple. The young novice was so meditative and silent that his companions called him a dumb ox. Albert discovered the talent of the big, silent student, and ever afterwards his greatest care was to nurture, develop and direct the talent of the youth, concerning whom he had exclaimed in prophetic admiration: "We call this young man a dumb ox, but so loud will be his bellowing in doctrine that it will resound throughout the world."

When they went together to Paris, Albert was about fifty-two years of age, and he knew from experience something of the remarkable intellectual activity which has caused the thirteenth century to be called "the classical epoch of the Middle Ages." He had studied at Paris, at Padua and at Bologna; had lectured in various cities on the works of Aristotle and on the Scriptures. People went in crowds to hear him and looked upon him as a prodigy of learning. In truth he was one of the glories of the Middle Ages, and he could tell his young pupil much about the professors and students of Paris, and of the other universities in which he had studied, or which he had visited.

The University of Paris.—Paris by this time had become the first philosophical and theological school of the world, and her university was the most important of the many excellent universities which were much more numerous in those days than is generally supposed by those who know nothing about this period except what they read in the works of prejudiced authors.

The very importance of the university to which professors and students flocked from all parts of the world, became the occasion of many disorders; for, where there were so many

gathered together, fired with ambition and enjoying the privileges which were lavished on teachers and students, it was but natural for youth to become relaxed, and for the professors to become haughty, ambitious and anxious to acquire a great name by upsetting old theories and introducing new doctrines.

Of these dangers and dangerous doctrines did Albert speak to Brother Thomas, then about twenty years of age, as he brought to Paris the young Count of Aquino, who was to become the brightest light of the Paris University, and the greatest theologian of the Catholic Church.

The story of St. Thomas' vocation to the Order of St. Dominic, and of the violent opposition of his mother and brothers is well known.[34a] His mother was ambitious to have her son become abbot of the celebrated Benedictine monastery of Monte Cassino, under the shadow of which he was born and within whose walls seven years of his boyhood had been spent. She was, therefore, very much disappointed when her son, who had been sent to study at Naples, received the habit of the Friars Preachers. The constancy of Thomas triumphed over all opposition, and he made his profession in the convent of Naples, whence he was soon afterwards transferred to Cologne, passing through Paris on the journey, in company with John the Teuton, who was master-general of the Order. His course of studies had not been completed when, in 1245, Albert was ordered to Paris to take the Doctor's cap and Thomas was sent with him to continue his studies under the greatest master of the age.

What St. Thomas Found at Paris.—What did St. Thomas find at Paris? An answer to this question must be given before we can understand his influence on religious thought. A complete and perfectly satisfactory answer cannot be given in the space of one article, and from the innumerable topics that might

[34a] Vaughan, op. cit., vol. I, ch. 6, *Trials of Vocation.*

be treated the most important only will be selected with a view to establishing the following proposition: The thirteenth century needed a learned and saintly man to *Christianize philosophy* and to *systematize theology*. This was the life-work of St. Thomas, whom Cardinal Bessarion called "the most saintly of learned men and the most learned of the saints." Because he accomplished this gigantic task in such a perfect manner that down to our own times no improvement has been made on his work, except in the acts of the Councils of the Church, which is always guided by the Holy Ghost, Leo XIII, adding new words of praise to the many enconmiums which had been heaped upon the name of St. Thomas by his predecessors, proposed the Angel of the Schools as the model teacher and Doctor, and appointed him to be the special patron of all Catholic schools, colleges, and universities throughout the world.

The Thirteenth Century.—Pope Leo XIII did many things which astonished the non-thinking people of our age. He was known to be a learned scholar as well as a saintly man. He was revered and even loved by many non-Catholics, and for this reason his acts have not been severely criticised; but outsiders must be puzzled to know why this enlightened nineteenth century pope so repeatedly called his children back to the standard of the thirteenth century, as he did in several of his immortal encyclicals, especially in his Letters on the Rosary, on the Restoration of Scholastic Philosophy, on the Christian Constitution of States, and on the Condition of the Working Classes. Many persons will be surprised to learn that the thirteenth century deserves to be called a golden age in the history of the world.[35] When St. Thomas went to Paris it was the most important centre of learning in the world, and was particularly noted as a school of theology. Here, as elsewhere, the Christian schools and episcopal

[35] Walsh, "The Thirteenth the Greatest of Centuries" (New York, 1907).

seminaries had become the foundations of universities. The change had been brought about so gradually that it is very difficult to assign the exact date of the foundation of the University of Paris. We know that in 1215, Innocent III, who had studied at Paris, gave to his Alma Mater a body of academic statutes, and from that day forward it was in a special manner under the protection of the Roman Pontiffs; but this act of Pope Innocent supposes that the University had been established.

A. T. Drane, in her "Christian Schools and Scholars," says that 1200 was the date of the formal recognition of the University. Church and state vied with each other in encouraging and assisting both professors and students, and the University of Paris could at one time boast of forty thousand students gathered within its walls from all parts of the world.

Intellectual Activity and Progress.—In the thirteenth century the human race attained the summit of intellectual greatness. Before that time Plato and Aristotle had carried human reason as high as unaided reason could go; but they were pagans and, great as they undoubtedly were, they made many mistakes. The study of their works will convince any candid mind of a truth which was defined by the Vatican Council, viz., that revelation is necessary for the human race in its present condition, in order that even those truths about things divine which of themselves are not beyond reason may be known in a short time, by all, with certitude and without error.

In the thirteenth century intellectual progress, under the guidance of faith, had reached that point where it could be said with truth: "Reason could go no higher; faith could not receive more numerous or stronger arguments from reason to explain and defend her dogmas."[36] This perfection was attained only after St. Thomas had lived and had written his immortal *Summa.*

[36] Leo XIII, Encycl., "Æterni Patris."

This is the great accomplishment which, according to Leo XIII, made St. Thomas the prince of all Christian philosophers. Towards this object were directed, under the guidance of Providence, the mighty efforts made in those times for the progress of mankind in all branches of knowledge. Paris, Bologna, Padua, Toulouse, Montpelier, Bordeaux, Siena, Bourges, Orleans, Salamanca, Valladolid, Vienna, Heidelberg, Cologne, Oxford, and Cambridge —to say nothing of less important places—are indebted for their universities and for their renown as seats of learning to that grand movement of intellectual activity which was at its height in the thirteenth century, and which continued in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, so that, before the period of the Reformation, sixty-six such institutions had been founded in various European countries.[37]

The world was progressing rapidly. Man is naturally inquisitive, anxious to know; hence there has always been an effort to establish schools and to perfect methods of training young minds. The history of these schools in various countries, from the birth of Christianity, when St. Mark established the first Christian school in Alexandria, down to our own times, forms one of the brightest and most interesting pages in the history of the Catholic Church.

In the thirteenth century men were no longer satisfied with the old Christian schools and seminaries. For years the *Trivium,* i.e., grammar, logic and rhetoric, had formed the standard of perfection for the ordinary schools, whilst the higher schools taught the *Quadrivium,* which embraced arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy. To these was added in the episcopal seminaries a practical training in chant and the liturgy, together with the study of the Scriptures.

In the thirteenth century men wanted something higher; they

[37] Drane, op. cit., p. 398.

wanted a university, i.e., "an aggregation of schools governed by a body of Doctors, who divide among themselves the several branches of instruction which, in the public schools, are united under one master."[38] In other words, instead of having all branches taught by one man, who was supposed to know almost everything, they decided that it would be better to have a body of teachers, each one a specialist in his own branch, without being ignorant of other branches; hence they established the universities, the most illustrious of which was the University of Paris.

Why had not this idea been more fully realized before the thirteenth century? Why were not our modern battleships built many centuries ago? Rome was not built in a day, and in like manner centuries passed before man had progressed up to the standard of the universities.

Scholasticism.—Scholasticism can be traced from its rise in the ninth century to its perfection in the thirteenth. The celebrities of the ninth century were Alcuin (735-804), Rabanus Maurus (776-856), Scotus Erigena, Henry of Auxerre, and his pupil, Remigius, the first who publicly taught dialectics at Paris. Then came the tenth century, called the age of iron, because it was a time of sterility. The eleventh century was noted for the disputes on the nature of the Universals, with the Nominalism of Roscelin, the exaggerated Realism of William of Champeaux, and the moderate Realism of St. Anselm, who also established the true principles on which reason should proceed in her inquires into the mysteries of revealed religion. In the twelfth century there were many aberrations. Abelard, puffed up with pride and self-sufficiency, introduced a very dangerous species of Rationalism; Amaury de Bene and David of Dinant fell into Pantheism; Averroes and other Arabian philosophers gave out poisonous interpretations of Aristotle's works; whilst, on the

[38] Analect. Jur. Pont.; quoted by Cath. Gaz., Oct. 26, 1854 in Drane, op. cit., p. 402.

other hand, the justly celebrated Peter Lombard became the father of systematized theology by writing his famous "Book of the Sentences," which was the favorite text-book of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, being afterwards replaced by the "Summa Theologiæ" of Alexander of Hales, and, finally, by the much more celebrated "Summa Theologica" of St. Thomas. In the meantime, Hugh and Richard, sweet mystics of the school of St. Victor, had endeavored both by written words and saintly example to remind the world of scholars that, though Abelard was great in the eyes of men, his opponent, St. Bernard, was great in the eyes of God, that reason is at best but a weak instrument of knowledge, unless it be strengthened by faith, and that the science of the love of God was much more important than skill in dialectics and the art of syllogizing.

The grand intellectual movement which we are considering culminated in the glories of the thirteenth century, giving to the world first, William of Auvergne, Alexander of Hales (*Doctor Irrefragabilis*), Vincent of Beauvais, author of the famous *Specula* or Encyclopedia of all knowledge, Roger Bacon (*Doctor Mirabilis*), Henry of Ghent (*Doctor Solemnis*), and Raymond Lullus (*Doctor Illuminatus*), author of the *Ars Universalis* or *Ars Magna,* wherein he taught a universal method and classified all knowledge and all things known.

These great minds constitute only the lesser lights of the thirteenth century. They are eclipsed by the greater lights that came afterwards, Albertus Magnus, St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, and Duns Scotus. Here we have Scholasticism in the truest and best sense of the word—reason applied to revelation, defending, systematizing, explaining and developing the mysteries of faith.

Advantages of the New System.—This universal mental activity and the system of studies to which it gave rise produced many desirable results, but it became at the same time the oc-

casion of many evils, which were not suppressed in a day but were gradually crushed or extirpated, thanks to the vigilance of the bishops and to the influence of learned and saintly men who were raised up by Providence just at the time when they were most needed. The task which confronted St. Thomas was that of discerning and determining what was good that he might exert his influence to promote and encourage it, and what was bad, that he might contend against it with all the force of his voice and pen. Some were rash enough to cry out against the new system simply because it was a departure from the simplicity of ancient times. They should have paused to think that the world will not remain stationary, and that many evils will always be found mixed in the beneficial results of rapid progress. As a matter of fact the establishment of the universities, with the progress of the Scholastics in philosophy and theology, notwithstanding certain evils much deplored, conferred upon the world benefits which have produced salutary results even down to our own times.

The men of those times could give us lessons on methods of learning and the time that should be devoted to the acquisition of knowledge. They did not make the mistake of supposing that a few years spent in a school and a few more spent in college made a man fit to enlighten the world and to propound luminous principles for the guidance of mankind. We know at least one scholar, John of Salisbury, the friend of St. Thomas à Becket, whose academic career extended over the space of twelve years, at the end of which time "he found himself possessed of a vast fund of erudition and an empty purse." [39] This was not, perhaps, the general rule, for John of Salisbury was the first scholar of his day, but it is certain that the system then followed required so much time as to draw from Fleury the remark that, "the system was excellent had its execution been possible; but life was

[39] Drane, op. cit., p. 360; Vaughan, op. cit., vol. I, p. 380.

too short to allow of a man's perfecting himself in every known branch of learning before entering on his theological studies." According to the statutes of Innocent III, promulgated at Paris in 1215 by his legate, Robert de Courçon, no one was to profess the arts before the age of twenty-one, or without having previously studied for six years under some approved master. To teach theology the statutes required that a man should be at least thirty-five years of age and that he should have studied under some approved master.

The rule was for a Bachelor to begin by explaining the Sentences in the school of some doctor for the space of a year. At the end of that time he was presented to the chancellor of the cathedral of Paris, and if on examination he was judged worthy, he received a license and became Licentiate, until he was received as Doctor, when he opened a school of his own in which he explained the "Sentences" for another year. At the end of that time he was allowed to receive some Bachelor under him. The whole Doctor's course called for three years of teaching; nor could anyone take a degree unless he had taught according to these regulations. It was this thorough course of studies which produced the great doctors of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

University Colleges.—For training the intellect the system was perfect, but the discipline of the soul was sometimes neglected, and to guard against this evil, colleges were established where the young men were exercised in religious duties and enjoyed the benefit of a regular training, in order to preserve the purity of their morals in the midst of many dangers and temptations. All the religious orders—the Trinitarians, Franciscans, Bernardines, Carmelites, Augustinians, Benedictines, Premonstratensians, Dominicans, and even the Carthusians and monks of Cluny—had their colleges or houses, where their subjects lived

and enjoyed the benefits of the university course without being exposed to the corrupting influences by which they were surrounded.

The bishops, in order to protect their students, imitated the example of the regulars, and established colleges which were to take the place of the episcopal seminaries.

The Sorbonne.—The first and most famous of these colleges was the Sorbonne, named after its founder, Robert de Sorbon, who was chaplain to St. Louis. This college, which was opened for the reception of secular students in 1253, was called by Crevier the greatest ornament of the university. In time it came to be regarded as the first theological school in the world, and its name has often been applied to the University itself.

Evils of the New System.—Before the university and Scholasticism reached the perfection which they had attained when the Sorbonne was established there was a period of formation and of gradual growth and development during which, besides the lack of discipline and the corruption of morals, there existed other imperfections and evils against which thoughtful men of the day raised their voices and took up their pens.

John of Salisbury and the "Cornificians."—John of Salisbury, in the twelfth century, complained bitterly that the study of dialectics and the prominence given to logical disputations had caused the neglect of good literature; and his caustic pen was ever ready to attack the "Cornificians," by which term he designated those who devoted themselves to philosophy rather than to the study of grammar, rhetoric, etc. Some justification for his severe criticisms is to be found in the conduct of the dialecticians themselves. They regarded logic and subtle reasoning as an end, not as a means of acquiring further knowledge. They wasted their time and talents in discussing useless questions, and fell into many serious errors.[40]

[40] See above, chapter ii.

Rationalism in the Schools.—Before Scholastic criticism was introduced scholars were diligent readers more than profound thinkers. They could tell what others had written on a subject, but they seldom investigated for themselves, and their writings were compilations rather than original compositions. With the revival of philosophical studies men began to investigate for themselves; and it is not surprising that they soon went to the other extreme, with the result that there was introduced into the schools an insidious species of Rationalism which, without denying the mysteries of faith, contended that reason could prove and explain them.

Raymond Lullus.—Raymond Lullus (1235-1315), in a proposition which was condemned in 1376 by Gregory XI, asserted that "all articles of faith, and the sacraments of the Church can be proved and are proved by reasons which are demonstrative, necessary and evident." Faith, he said, was necessary for rustics but not for philosophers, and reason is a safer guide than faith for knowing the things that are of faith.[41]

Abelard.—Raymond Lullus, however, did little more than re-echo the errors of one who had preceded him by more than a century, the celebrated and unfortunate Abelard (1079-1142), who enjoys the unenviable distinction of being the great champion of Scholastic Rationalism. Abelard was talented and brilliant, but he lacked humility, and pride marred a career which might have been productive of much good to the Church. He would not submit to authority; he would not even consent to be taught. He attended the lectures of William of Champeaux, not with a desire to listen and to learn but with the secret design of shining before his fellow-students and perplexing his master by proposing subtle, vexatious questions, and soon set up an independent school, where he taught not only logic, but even Scrip-

[41] See Denzinger, "Enchirid. Symbl. et Definit., n.n. 474, 475, 495.

ture and Theology. This was against the established custom, according to which no scholar could teach who had not previously gone through a regular course of study under an approved master, and Abelard was really attempting to teach branches which he had never studied. Logic, in his hands, became not a means for acquiring the knowledge of truth, but an end; and he used it not for the purpose of knowing the truth but rather to prove that what others said was not true. His brilliancy and wit attracted crowds of students, his pride became greater as his fame increased, and he soon attempted to explain the profoundest mysteries of faith by the light of reason. To believe without doubting, he said, was the religion of women and children; to doubt all things before we believe them was alone worthy of the dignity of man, and proofs of the truths of revealed religion were to be furnished by reason.[42]

The school of St. Victor opposed the errors of Abelard. St. Bernard emerged from the solitude of Citeaux to attack the new heresy, and Abelard's treatise on the Holy Trinity was condemned at the Council of Soissons, and also at Sens in 1140.

Abelard died a few years later, but the seeds of Rationalism which he had sown were to bear fruit after his death. Crevier relates the story of Simon of Tournai, "who blasphemously boasted that it was as easy for him to disprove, as to prove the existence of God. He offered to do so on the following day, but in the midst of his impious speech was struck with apoplexy, and the event was regarded as a manifestation of the Divine displeasure." [43] We have already seen that his errors were afterwards revived by Raymond Lullus, who lived from 1235 to 1315; and in the time of St. Thomas there was need of a master-mind to determine the true relations of faith and reason.

[42] For observations on the difference between Scholastic and Modern Rationalism see Gonzales, "Hist. de la Fil.," vol. II, pp. 114 and 115.

[43] Drane, op. cit., p. 407.

Averroes.—Another false system which was introduced into Paris in the twelfth century, and which perhaps more than any other error of the times, exercised an influence on the writings of St. Thomas, was named after its author, Averroism. Averroes, the son of an Arabian physician, was born at Cordova, in the beginning of the twelfth century. It is difficult to determine his religion since he scoffed alike at Christianity, Judaism, and Mohammedanism. He is the most illustrious representative of the Moorish school of philosophy, and was remarkably well-versed in grammar, medicine, jurisprudence, philosophy and theology. He is best known as the great "Commentator" on the works of Aristotle, and his works found their way to Paris at a time when there existed a veritable craze for the study of philosophy. St. Thomas says that he was "not so much a Peripatetic as a perverter of Peripatetic philosophy." (*Non tam fuit Peripateticus quam peripateticæ philosophiæ depravator.*)[44] In his works are to be found Rationalism, Pantheism, destruction of the human personality, and denial of the immortality of the individual soul. These errors cluster around one grand principle, viz., that all mankind has one common intellect. This hypothesis was invented by the "Commentator" to explain the existence of universal ideas as found alike in all minds. All men have the same ideas of a horse, a dog, an angel, a circle, a quadrangle, etc., and Averroes concluded from this that all men had one intellect. It would be charitable to suppose that the Parisian doctors did not see the far-reaching conclusions of this pernicious doctrine, which they embraced with the avidity of men hungry for knowledge, being blinded and infatuated with the desire of singularity. We find them teaching that after death all souls are merged in one, and thus that all distinction of reward and punishment would be impossible.

[44] St. Thom., Opusc. "De Unit. Intell."

The love of novelty turned the heads of Christian philosophers, and professors of a Catholic university maintained such propositions as the following: That the will is not free; that there is but one intellect for all men; that all lower things are under the necessary influence of the heavenly bodies; that God cannot bestow immortality; that the soul corrupts; that God does not know individual things; that the acts of men are not governed by a Divine Providence, and many other equally erroneous and startling.[45]

PANTHEISM.—*Amaury de Bene.*—Almaric (Amaury) de Bene (1205) publicly taught that human nature could be identified with the Divinity; that the Eternal Father became incarnate in Abraham, the Eternal Son in Mary, and the Holy Ghost in us, and that all things in reality are one because all things in reality are God. This was Averroistic pantheism. Because all things are one in the mind of God, followers of Averroes concluded that the one intellect of all men was the intellect of God, and thus the distinction between God and His creatures soon vanished.

David of Dinant.—David of Dinant taught that God is the primary substance of all things. St. Thomas applies to this man's argument in support of his error one of the strongest expressions used in his "Summa," calling it very foolish (*stultissime posuit*).[46] David taught that God and the first matter (*materia prima*) were identical, because since both were simple, there was nothing which could constitute a difference between them. No, says St. Thomas, they are so far apart that there could not be such a slight distinction between them as a Scholastic difference (*differentia*); they are entirely diverse,[47] hence they cannot be

[45] Vaughan, op. cit., vol. I, p. 405; Turner, "History of Philosophy" (Boston, 1903), ch. xxxvi; Mandonnet, "Siger de Brabant et l'Averroisme Latin au XIII me Siècle" (Louvain, 1911).

[46] St. Th., Ip. qu. III, art. VIII, corp. and ad. 3.

[47] *Idem.*, loc. cit.

identical. Albertus Magnus, in his old age, took up his pen to write against these pernicious doctrines, which were promptly condemned by the Church.

Decree Against Aristotle.—Radically to extirpate these evils it was determined at a Council held at Paris in 1210 to forbid the study of Aristotle's Physics and Metaphysics. The prohibition was afterwards modified by Gregory IX, but the evil had not been fully abated, and, before the end of the thirteenth century, the Parisian doctors again taught pagan errors. "Even those who did not push the abuse to such extremes," says Crevier, "altered, at least in part, the purity of the Christian dogma by interpretations more conformable to the spirit of Aristotle than of the Fathers," and it was this evil more than any other which vitiated the Christian philosophy of the thirteenth century when St. Thomas went to Paris.

Remedy for Evils.—Contemplating this sad state of affairs in the first theological school in the world, we may well ask: What remedy did Providence apply to this great evil? And the answer comes: He sent into the world St. Thomas of Aquin, who was to regenerate philosophy and to become the Christian Aristotle. How St. Thomas accomplished the task which Providence had prepared for him and for which he was providentially prepared will be more fully explained in another article.

Light in the Darkness.—Suffice it to say, for the present, that, with the discerning eye of a genius and of a saint, he surveyed the field, and soon determined in his own mind what course was to be pursued. First he saw that it would be impossible, even if it were desirable, to suppress the general movement in favor of deep philosophical studies, which swept over the world as irresistibly as the tide of the mighty ocean advances to the seashore.

Aristotle to be Christianized.—In the next place, he saw that

the most deplorable errors of the times sprang from reading Aristotle as he was misrepresented by the Arabian commentators; and he knew well from his master, Albert, and from the writings of Boethius and St. Isidore of Seville, that the doctrines of the Stagyrite would not necessarily make a philosopher rationalistic, Averroistic, or pantheistic. Cardinal Gonzalez, in his history of philosophy (Fr. tr., vol. II, p. 114), justly rejects the oft-repeated statement that Europe is indebted to the Arabian philosophers, and especially to Averroes, for the knowledge of Aristotle's writings. Nothing could be more false, he says; Boethius, who lived in the sixth century, St. Isidore, who lived in the sixth and part of the seventh, were well acquainted with the writings of Aristotle. Boethius, who had spent a number of years in Greece, tells us that he translated and commented upon all the works of Aristotle that came into his hands. Neither Boethius nor St. Isidore fell into any of the extravagant errors which were taught at Paris, and St. Thomas saw that the evil lay not in Aristotle but in Aristotle misunderstood and misrepresented, as he was in the writings of Averroes and other Arabian philosophers. He resolved, therefore, to purify and Christianize the philosophy of Aristotle, in order to make it what it should be, the handmaid of Christian theology. God, Who is the Author of reason as well as of revelation, by His grace and in His mercy moved St. Thomas to make this resolution when he saw the condition of philosophy in the thirteenth century.

CHAPTER V

INFLUENCE OF ST. THOMAS ON PHILOSOPHY

The brief and imperfect sketch of the condition of philosophy in the thirteenth century, which was given in the preceding chapter, will suffice to determine what judgment should be passed on those who can see nothing but darkness in the Middle Ages. Notwithstanding the imperfections and errors which accompanied the rise of Scholasticism, the establishment of the universities and the general revival of philosophical and theological studies, it must be admitted by candid observers that our own enlightened century cannot boast of greater intellectual activity, or of more rapid progress in those branches of knowledge which make men truly great in mind.

When we remember that two hundred years before printing was invented the medieval universities had reached a state of perfection of which Yale and Harvard might well be proud at the beginning of the twentieth century, we can form some conception of the patient toil and giant energy which characterized the professors and scholars of the thirteenth century, and we shall be disposed to judge kindly of their imperfections and of the errors into which they fell.

Providence Rules the World.—That those errors were serious and of such a nature as to cause alarm is evident from a cursory glance at the history of the medieval universities. The days preceding the arrival of St. Thomas at Paris were indeed very dark. The atmosphere was filled with gloomy forebodings

of schism, heresy, infidelity, and of all those dangers to the faith which necessarily flow from the destruction of the principles regulating the relations of faith and science. When the professors of a Catholic university openly taught Rationalism and Pantheism, to say nothing of a host of minor errors, men might well have asked: "If the salt of the earth lose its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?" [48] Judging by the rules of merely human prudence one would have said that the University of Paris was fast drifting into infidelity, and dragging the world with it.

To suppose, however, that such a state of things was to continue, and that no remedy would be found to check the growing evil, would be to fall into the error of those who do not count upon Divine Providence in reading the history of the past or in prophesying with regard to the future. The one grand lesson to be learned from the reading of history in the light of Christianity is this: That there is a God Whose wisdom and power direct the affairs of this world in such a manner as to promote the ends which He wishes to attain. In order to manifest this truth to men God from time to time permits the recurrence of those dark and gloomy periods when no ray of light can be hoped for unless it be sent from above. Paris in the thirteenth century furnishes a striking illustration of such a period, of such a crisis in human affairs; and the angelic intellect of St. Thomas was the bright ray of light sent forth from the Eternal Sun of truth to remind philosophers of "the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world," [49] pointing out with unerring accuracy the paths leading to true science and solid virtue, conducting men to the throne of the Almighty, who rules over the world of minds as well as over the material world.

Predecessors and Contemporaries of St. Thomas.—This statement must not be understood as detracting in any way from the

[48] St. Matt., v, 13.
[49] St. John, i, 9.

praise which is due to other great philosophers and theologians who illustrated the Church at the time when Scholasticism came to be the handmaid of religion. It would be a sin against justice as well as a crime against historical truth to ignore the influence for good exerted by such men as St. Anselm, St. Bernard, Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure, Albertus Magnus, and a host of less renowned but very learned and saintly men whose lives were devoted in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries to the defence and development of Christian doctrine. But, with all due respect for their claims to our admiration and gratitude, it is universally admitted that, in the midst of the darkness and confusion of the thirteenth century, St. Thomas was the one grand, bright star in the firmament, shedding light into the darkness, throwing order into the confused mass of philosophical and theological opinions which prevented a clear and systematic conception of the truths of revelation.

LEO XIII ON ST. THOMAS.—"Amongst the Scholastic doctors," writes Leo XIII, "Thomas Aquinas stands pre-eminent, being the Prince and Master of all." [50] The Pontiff then quotes the words of Cardinal Cajetan, who wrote of St. Thomas: "Because he had the deepest veneration for the sacred Doctors of old, he acquired, in a measure, the intelligence of them all." (*Doctores sacros, quia summe veneratus est, ideo intellectum omnium quodammodo sortitus est.*)

St. Thomas himself, in his Christian humility and solid good sense, was the first to recognize the advantages he had derived from those who preceded him. It is edifying as well as instructive to note with what reverence and affection he mentions Plato and Aristotle, St. Augustine, Boethius, St. Isidore, Peter Lombard, the "Master of the Sentences," Albertus Magnus, and other authors whose works are quoted in his writings. He would

[50] Leo XIII, Encyl. "Æterni Patris."

not accept our words of praise if, in exaggerated admiration of his mighty work, we failed to recognize and proclaim the influence exerted on his mind by those who went before him, especially by the authors just mentioned. St. Thomas does not need any words of exaggerated praise. His true glory comes from this, that having acquired, by study and with the assistance of Heaven, a knowledge of the true principles of Christian philosophy, he applied them in such a manner that posterity, in grateful recognition of his services to the Faith, has unanimously saluted him as the Christian Aristotle and the prince of theologians.

Newman's Definition of a Great Mind.—"A truly great intellect," writes Cardinal Newman, "and one recognized to be such by the common opinion of mankind, such as the intellect of Aristotle or of St. Thomas, of Newton or of Goethe—is one which takes a connected view of old and new, past and present, far and near, and which has an insight into the influence of all these one on another, without which there is no whole and no centre. It possesses the knowledge, not only of things, but also of their mutual and true relations; knowledge not merely considered as acquirement, but as philosophy." [51]

Educated in quiet, trained in piety, strong in faith, obedient to authority, St. Thomas, with his all-embracing and penetrating mind, surveyed the world of the universities. He saw the old and the new, the past and the present; he recognized all that was good whether in the old or new; his keen eye quickly detected the errors which were countenanced at Paris in the thirteenth century; and he was not slow in determining to devote his life to the work of *Christianizing philosophy* and *systematizing theology.*

Reconciliation of Faith and Reason in the Thirteenth Century.—The great triumph of the thirteenth century was the

[51] Newman, "Idea of a University," Disc. VI, p. 134.

reconciliation of faith and reason; and for this victory we are indebted principally to St. Thomas, of whom Leo XIII writes: "He distinguished reason from faith, but he joined them together in friendly union, preserving the rights and recognizing the dignity of each; so that reason, reared aloft on the wings of St. Thomas, could scarcely soar higher, and it was almost impossible even for faith to be supported by additional or stronger aids from reason than had already been furnished by the Angelic Doctor." [52] In these words of Pope Leo we have a résumé of the life-work of St. Thomas.

Choice of Aristotle as Model.—The first step he took in the accomplishment of his Heaven-given task was to choose Aristotle as the model philosopher, whose works he was to use and whose principles he was to apply even in what he did for the perfection of theological science. History has proved the wisdom of his choice, which was not made without exciting some adverse criticism. If St. Thomas ever spoke to others of his plans we can imagine his brethren attempting to dissuade him from what many must have looked upon as the dream of an enthusiastic Utopian. Was not Aristotle responsible for the Rationalism and Pantheism which disgraced the University of Paris? Had not Robert de Courçon, the papal legate, forbidden the reading of Aristotle's Physics and Metaphysics? These representations were made with sincerity and with much force, but St. Thomas was unmoved. From Boethius and St. Isidore and especially from his old master, Albertus Magnus, he had learned to know Aristotle and the value of his works. Moreover, granting for the sake of argument that, speculatively speaking, it would have been better to have chosen Plato, or to cry down philosophical studies which had been abused at Paris, and advocate a return to the study of the Fathers and of the Scriptures, there was a

[52] Leo XIII, Encycl. "Æterni Patris.

practical aspect of the question which St. Thomas did not overlook. The movement in favor of Aristotle was so strong that it could not be resisted.

"The university professors of the thirteenth century," writes Mother Drane, "regarded Aristotle much as the masters of Carthage had done, of whom St. Augustine says that they spoke of the Categories of that philosopher with their cheek bursting with pride, as of something altogether divine." [53] Hence it would have been impossible to dissuade them from reading the works of the Stagyrite. Had that attempt been made, they would have complained that the Church was opposed to the spread of learning and of philosophical enquiry. Notwithstanding all that was done by Albertus Magnus, St. Thomas, and other Scholastic doctors, that calumny has been spread and repeated, and our own ears may have heard utterances founded on a lurking suspicion that the Church *is* opposed to the universal diffusion of knowledge and scientific investigation. There would have been a specious pretext for the charge had the great Scholastic doctors risen up in arms against Aristotle. It must now be branded as an infamous calumny by every intelligent man who has even an imperfect knowledge of the career of St. Thomas, and of the honors which learned men of all classes, during the last six centuries, have united in heaping upon the great Christian Commentator of Aristotle. Wisely, then, did St. Thomas resolve to use his influence and devote his energies, not to the suppression of Aristotle, but to the purification of his works.

Text of Aristotle Corrected and Purified.—His first care was to obtain an accurate copy of the works of Aristotle. William of Moerbeke, O.P., who was afterwards appointed archbishop of Corinth (in 1277), translated Aristotle's works directly from the Greek for the use and at the request of St. Thomas, "who him-

[53] Drane, op. cit., p. 428.

self understood the language well enough to criticise his friend's version." [54] He next set himself to the task of purifying the text of the pagan philosopher from all errors that were opposed to the truths of Christianity. This he did in his Commentaries on Aristotle, which alone would have sufficed to render his name immortal. They fill five volumes (small quarto) in the Parma edition of his works.

Averroes Annihilated.—St. Thomas never lost sight of that arch-enemy of Christianity, Averroes, whose writings had contributed more than any other cause to the perversion of the principles of philosophy at Paris. One feels like saying that this "perverter of Peripatetic philosophy," as St. Thomas calls him, had the genius of a fallen angel, so insidious are the errors which he cunningly wove into his explanations of Aristotle's theories. Abelard had been captivated by the vigor and originality of his writings, and became, in consequence, the parent of Rationalism. Amaury de Bene fell into Pantheism because he was blinded by the insidious and specious Averroistic theory which asserted that all men had but one intellect. In fact, most men of ordinary capacity either would have been carried away by the current of universal enthusiasm and admiration for the Commentator, or would have shrunk with horror from the study of a philosophy which caused the professors of a Catholic university to forget the principles of their faith and to ignore the warning words of the authority appointed by Jesus Christ to point out the ways of truth. St. Thomas, in the calmness of his transcendant and penetrating genius, took a more elevated and practical view of the situation. Averroes, not Aristotle, was the cause of all the confusion; hence Aristotle was to be retained, Averroes was to be confounded, refuted, and rejected by all means known to champions of the true faith.

[54] Drane, *ibid.*, p. 441.

Hence it is that the errors of Averroes are mentioned and refuted on almost every page of St. Thomas' writings, and after the example of his master, Albertus Magnus, he wrote one book, "De Unitate Intellectus," which is devoted entirely to a refutation of the fundamental theory of Averroes, viz., that all men had but one intellect. Because universal ideas are alike in all minds, therefore, concluded Averroes, they are the product of one intellect; hence there is but one intellect in all men. Amaury de Bene, considering that this intellect is the noblest part of man, and that which makes him like unto God; considering also that all things are one in the mind of God, concluded that the intellect of God and the intellect of man were identical. This was downright Pantheism, yet these strange theories were openly taught by professors of the University of Paris. St. Thomas refuted these pernicious theories by establishing a true conception of the nature and powers of man's intellect and of his knowledge of universal ideas.

Soul is the Form of the Human Body.—Rejecting Plato's dualistic theory which made the soul and body of man two distinct beings joined together without substantial unity, he adopted, explained, and defended the teaching of Aristotle, that the soul is the substantial form of the human body, distinct from it, but united so intimately with it that the two form one substantial being, which is an individual of the human species.[55] The soul alone is not the man; the body is not the man; but the soul and body united constitute an individual man, a person, e.g., John, or Peter, or Paul. This doctrine was afterwards solemnly defined as a dogma of Catholic faith at the Council of Vienne (1311-1312), and its proclamation by St. Thomas was a death-blow to Averroism. If the soul belongs to a particular individual, then there is no place for the Averroistic dream of one intellect for

[55] St. Th., 1, qu. 76, a. 1.

all men. Moreover, there is no foundation for such a oneness of intellect as Averroes imagined. Universal ideas are alike in all men, but they are not numerically identical. By my intellect I form the same kind of idea that you form in your mind. The matter of these ideas is furnished by the senses, which perceive the objects of the external world, but from the same material furnished by the senses I form my idea and you form your idea, as each one knows from psychological experience. Likeness of the ideas formed is no proof of the identity of the intellects forming them; just as a strong resemblance between two beautiful faces does not prove—and no one thinks it does prove—that the two beauties are one person.

Pantheism Refuted.—This doctrine of Aristotle and St. Thomas removes the foundation on which was built the Pantheism of Amaury de Bene. If ideas which are alike can be formed by intellects which are distinct, this is no reason for supposing that God's intellect—the Mind in Which all things are one—is identical with the intellect of individuals. The wild error of Amaury is nothing but the exaggeration and perversion of a great truth. Contemplating his intellect every man should exclaim with the Psalmist: "The light of Thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us," but he is not justified in saying, as did the Pantheists of old and the Ontologists in our days, that that light is God Himself.[56]

Our minds are participations and effects of the one great, supreme Intelligence; they are rays emanating from the great Sun of justice and truth; but effects are distinct from the causes which produce them, and rays are distinct from the light which sends them forth. The intellect of each man is a substantial unity, with its own powers and its own operations, and the very imperfection of those powers and of those operations should have

[56] St. Th., 1 p., qu. 84, art. 5: qu. 88, art. 3, ad. 1 and ad. 2.

been sufficient to convince men that they were distinct from the Divinity, being mere shadows, when compared with the great light by which the minds of all men are enlightened.

Rationalism Rejected—True Relations of Faith and Reason.—The next great service which St. Thomas rendered to Philosophy was to determine the true relations between faith and reason. Leo XIII writes in his Encyclical "Æterni Patris": "One would almost say that St. Thomas was present at all the Councils of the Church held since his time and that he presided over the deliberations of the assembled Fathers." In the last General Council, held at the Vatican under Pope Pius IX, decrees were promulgated against the Rationalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Whoever takes the pains to read the chapter of the Council on Faith and Reason will see that the principles therein proposed and defined are almost verbatim the same as the principles which St. Thomas proposed and elucidated in order to confound the Rationalists of his days. St. Thomas was not a Don Quixote, fighting against spectres and windmills; he was a living, practical philosopher, and he used the powerful intellect which God gave him to destroy theories and errors which were actually in vogue when he wrote. Whether the Rationalism of the thirteenth century should be ascribed principally to the infidelity of Averroes, who had no faith, or to the pride of Abelard, who was full of conceit and self-sufficiency, or to the exaggerated enthusiasm for philosophical studies, which blinded men in so far that "fools rushed in where angels feared to tread," certain it is that Rationalism was one of the living errors which St. Thomas was called to destroy. Philosophers attempted to prove and explain everything, even the sublimest mysteries of faith. Disciples of Averroes taught that the doctrines of faith and the conclusion of reason might be contradictory; but that made little difference, because then the mind simply came to no conclusion;

in other words, it believed nothing at all, and truth became a mere matter of words.[57]

St. Thomas' whole person and life and all his writings are a contradiction and refutation of this doctrine. He was a living proof of the truth that faith and science should not be enemies, but should live in harmony, and that strong faith does not preclude the fullest exercise and development of man's highest faculty, reason. He was a firm believer in all the truths of Christianity, yet no scientist of any age used his reason more than St. Thomas did; but he was careful to determine with the pen of a master the province of faith and the limits beyond which reason must not venture. St. Thomas determined so accurately and so luminously the true relations of faith and reason that, since his time, nothing more has been required to refute any error that may have arisen on this subject than to call attention to his principles; and the principal motive which impelled Leo XIII to write his Encyclical on the restoration of Scholastic philosophy was the desire to see reason united with faith and serving it in our time as it did in the days of St. Thomas.

The following is a summary of his principles determining the true relations of faith and reason. They are found chiefly in "Cont. Gent.," Book I—"Exposit. in lib. Boethii de Trinit.," Quest. II, art. 3, and in the "Summa Theol.," passim, especially in Quest. I.

Distinction Between Natural and Supernatural.—(1) There are two distinct classes of truth, the natural and supernatural. Natural truths are those which can be known by the reason of man unaided by revelation. Man, by the power of his intellect, without any especial assistance from God, can know many things about himself, about the material world, and about God; or, as

[57] Drane, op. cit., p. 429; Dalgairns, "Introduction to Life of St. Richard," pp. 32-37.

St. Thomas says, about things that are beneath him, things that are in him, and things that are above him.[58]

Supernatural truths are those mysteries,[59] hidden from ages and generations in God, which man never could or would have known, had they not been revealed by the Spirit of God, which "searcheth all things, even the deep things of God."[60] The elevation of man to the supernatural order, the Trinity of Persons in one God, the Incarnation, the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist, the efficacy of Baptism and of the other sacraments —to give a few examples—are truths which man can know only because God has deigned to make them known by revelation Hence it is wrong to suppose with Abelard and other Rationalists that all things are to be measured by the mind of man. Our intellect is finite, but it tells us with certainty that God is infinite, hence we could prove *a priori* a truth which we know from experience, that there are more things in heaven and on earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy.

No Opposition Between Faith and Reason.— (2) Although the truths of faith are distinct from natural truths, and faith is above reason, there can never be any real contradiction between faith and science. God is the Author of reason as well as of revelation; God cannot contradict Himself or teach error; hence, as St. Thomas wrote,[61] revelation does not destroy the light of reason, but rather completes and perfects it, as grace perfects nature and the faculties of the soul.

How can any intelligent man for an instant suppose that there could be real opposition between faith and reason, both of which come from God? There may be an apparent contradiction, but this only proves that what we supposed to be a certain teaching

[58] St. Th., 1, prol. in qu. 84: See Vatican Council, ch. IV.
[59] Vatican Council, *ibid.*
[60] Col. 1, 26; 1 Cor., II, 7, 8, 9, 10.
[61] St. Th., Exposit. in Bœthium De Trin.

of science was not science, or that we had a false conception of God's revelation. Admit God, and it must be admitted that He cannot contradict Himself.

Faith and Reason United in Harmony.—(3) Faith and reason should go hand in hand, not indeed as equals, because one is the light of God and the other is the light given to a creature by God, but as a mistress and her servant live together in peace and harmony.

Faith Protects Reason from Error.—(1) Faith, or revelation, protects reason and prevents it from falling into error. We know from history that the greatest among the pagan philosophers fell into many errors even concerning truths that could have been known by reason. Cicero denied God's fore-knowledge. Plato admitted the eternity of matter, and in his ethico-political system defended communism, the suppression of individual rights and the supremacy of the state. Aristotle, who was perhaps the greatest of all the philosophers of antiquity, improved upon the political system of Plato, but retained some of his errors. Moreover, he denied the universality of God's providence, and to this day it is an open question whether he denied the eternity of matter and whether he affirmed the immortality of the human soul. Without revelation, says St. Thomas, sublime, natural truths would be known only by a few, and after long investigation, and even then doubt and error would be intermingled with their knowledge.[62] See what wild theories are proposed to-day by those who do not follow the guidance of faith!

Widens the Field of Investigation.—(2) Moreover, faith opens up new fields of investigation. Outsiders think that believing Christians are very much restricted in the use of their reason. Why do they not pause to think more seriously? We have as wide a field for investigation as they have, plus the very

[62] St. Thomas, 1 p., qu. 1, art. 1; "Cont. Gent.," lib. 1, ch. IV.

wide and fertile field furnished by the revelation of truths which to them are unknown. The difference consists in this: they investigate as groping around in the dark, we investigate under the direction of a Guide Who can neither deceive nor be deceived. If they will take the pains to read a good work on Catholic philosophy and theology, they will soon see how much has been added to the science of philosophy by the efforts of those who investigated and penetrated, as far as it is possible for the human mind to penetrate, into the depths of the mysteries which were revealed by God to man.

What Reason Should Do for Faith.—This brings us to the point where St. Thomas (especially "Exposit. in Boethium De Trin."), definitely and accurately points out the service which reason should render to faith. In sacred doctrine, says St. Thomas, we can use philosophy in three ways: (1) to prepare for faith, (2) to explain the truths of faith, (3) to defend the truths of faith. Revelation in itself does not need the service of reason; because revelation, objectively taken, is God's own knowledge, which is perfect in itself and in no manner depends on the mind of man. But this revelation, if it is to guide man, must be received by him, and understood by him; the work of preparing man to receive the faith and to understand what he believes is the work of reason.

Reason Proves the Preambles of Faith.—In the first place, there are certain truths which faith presupposes—*preambula fidei,* preambles to faith—St. Thomas calls them. Before we can believe what God has revealed we must first know that we have a soul capable of grasping metaphysical truth; that there is a God Who knows all things and is incapable of deceiving us, and that we have good reasons for believing that God has spoken to men, revealing truths which otherwise would not have been

known. Moreover, we should not be prepared to believe what is revealed with regard to the supernatural and ineffable joys of Heaven if we did not first hold that our souls are immortal. To prove these truths and thus prepare men for faith is the first service of reason to revelation.

Reason Explains and Develops the Doctrine Revealed.—In the next place, reason may be used to explain, to put in order and to develop the revealed doctrines. St. Augustine, for instance, in his books on the Trinity, makes use of many similitudes taken from philosophy in order to give some faint conception of the unity of God's nature in three Divine Persons. Moreover, the truths accepted on faith must be put in order, lest there be confusion in the mind of the believer. Some people cannot tell just what they do believe, and it is easy to find men who stumble over the Immaculate Conception or papal infallibility after accepting, without the least hesitation, the greatest of all revealed mysteries, the Trinity. They would not be so illogical if they made better use of their reason. Then, again, the truths revealed are like seeds or germs containing in themselves many other truths which may be evolved or developed from the principles of faith. For instance, when it has been declared that Jesus Christ was God and man, this truth, scientifically explained and developed, furnishes us with a number of truths with regard to the Body, the Mind and the Will of Christ, and with regard to the nature of the union between the divinity and humanity. But these truths will remain hidden unless reason deduces them as theological conclusions from the principles of faith.

Reason Defends Faith.—The third service of reason to revelation consists in defending the faith. The dogmas of the Christian religion are not accepted by all mankind. Some attempt to undermine the foundations of our faith, and some, without pay-

ing any attention to the foundations, attack the sacred edifice in spots which to them appear weak. Against such attacks we cannot use any weapons except those furnished by reason, because our opponents do not admit the principles of faith. Reason, says St. Thomas, can defend the faith in two ways: First, positively, by showing that the objections brought forward are founded in falsehood; second, negatively, by showing that, whatever truth may be in them, they at least do not prove the falsity of the Christian dogma against which they are urged.[63]

To sum up: reason prepares the mind for faith; reason explains the truths of faith; reason defends the truths of faith. These principles are frequently laid down by St. Thomas, and they were applied in all his works, especially in the "Summa contra Gentes" and in the "Summa Theologica." There is no exaggeration in saying that these principles form an undercurrent which runs through all his works, coming to the surface from time to time, as if to remind his readers that they furnish the key to St. Thomas' plans for reforming and perfecting philosophy.

St. Thomas Proves the Preambles.—(1) St. Thomas surpasses all ecclesiastical writers in his masterful treatises on those truths which are necessary as a preparation for faith. The chapters which he wrote on the reality of intellectual knowledge, on the existence and veracity of God, on the spirituality and immortality of the human soul, and on the reasonableness of Christian faith, supported as it is by God's own arguments, miracles and prophecies, stand to-day and will continue to stand as monuments to his genius.

St. Thomas Explains and Develops Faith.—(2) His explanations and developments of the dogmas of faith, in the 'Summa against the Gentiles" and in the "Summa Theologica," affords a

[63] St. Th., 1 p., qu. 1, art. 8; qu. 32, a. 1, c. and ad. 2; "Bœth. de Trin.," Prœm. qu. 2, a. 5.

justification for all the encomiums that have been heaped upon him by popes, councils, universities and religious orders, and have caused his "Summa Theologica" to be considered the *ne plus ultra* of human reason explaining the truths of revelation—a masterpiece of human genius, the greatest masterpiece that the world has ever known.

St. Thomas Defends Faith.—(3) In defending the truths of faith and in answering objections St. Thomas is truly wonderful. Those who are acquainted with his works are not surprised at the words of Leo XIII: "He alone confuted all the errors of past times, and at the same time supplied invincible weapons for overcoming those which were constantly to arise in the future." [64]

St. Thomas saw all sides of a question and it is a well-known fact that it is almost impossible to find an argument brought forward by modern heresy or unbelief which was not proposed and answered by St. Thomas. In the "Summa Theologica" alone ten thousand objections are proposed and answered. Thus did St. Thomas press reason into the service of faith.

This compendious and imperfect description of his labors for the reformation of Christian philosophy will suffice to show that he was in reality the Heaven-sent genius who introduced order into the confused efforts and systems of Christian philosophers in the thirteenth century. Much might be said concerning the army of learned teachers, preachers, and writers whose talents have been devoted to the service of God, and who gloried in being called disciples of St. Thomas, whom the University of Paris calls the *fons doctorum*—the source, or fountain, from which doctors spring. The history of these disciples, from the close of the thirteenth century down to our own days, would be very interesting and instructive, but such a study would extend far beyond the scope of a short sketch. Whoever knows,

[64] Leo XIII, "Æterni Patris."

though it be only in outline, the writings of the Angelic Doctor, will see clearly that his was the master-mind which, after Christianizing the philosophy of the thirteenth century, became, and will continue to be, the type of perfection for all Christian philosophers.

CHAPTER VI

THE SUMMA THEOLOGICA OF ST. THOMAS

A *Summa Theologica* is, broadly speaking, a compendium, summary, or manual of theology. There is not in the English language an exact equivalent of the Latin word *Summa* as it was used by medieval writers. Perhaps the words "Complete Manual" would best convey to people using our language the idea which was in the minds of those who invented the Latin term. We always think of a compendium, or summary, as of a book or *Excerpta,* in which many things are omitted, some of these being either necessary or important. In a Summa there must be no such omissions. Things may be left out which properly would find a place only in a complete elucidation and development of a subject considered in all its aspects; but the Summa must contain a statement, explanation and proof of all that is necessary for the comprehension of the subject as a whole and in all its essential parts. Some latitude is allowed in the choice of divisions, arguments and illustrations. Summæ composed by different men treating the same subject may not be similar in all respects. In all cases, however, the doctrine must be complete, briefly stated, sufficiently proved, illustrated and defended. Many such books were composed in the Middle Ages, some dealing with history, some with philosophy, some with theology or kindred subjects, the best known and most important of these being the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas (see Catholic Encyclopedia, *s. v. Summæ*).

Nearly six and a half centuries have passed since the death of St. Thomas (d. 1274), and yet his work is still considered the simplest and most perfect sketch of universal theology to be found in any language. Its value is recognized not only by

Catholics but also by outsiders, even by the enemies of revealed religion. On this subject readers are referred to the Encyclical Letter, "Æterni Patris," of Leo XIII and to the article "Thomas Aquinas, Saint," in the Catholic Encyclopedia. St. Thomas' renowned work is a Summa in the best sense of the word. In it nothing is superfluous, nothing is wanting. It is a compendious, but complete, exposition of sacred doctrine, written in language so clear and concise that one is in constant admiration of the genius and sanctity of one who could express so well his knowledge of God and all things pertaining to God. Pope Pius X, shortly before his death, viz., in June, 1914, issued a document imposing the obligation of using the Summa of St. Thomas as the text-book in all higher schools in Italy and the adjacent islands which enjoyed the privilege of conferring academic degrees in theology. All institutions failing to comply with the Pontifical order within three years were to be deprived of the power to confer degrees. It is not probable that Benedict XV, an admirer of Leo XIII and a friend of Pius X, will revoke or modify the decree of his saintly predecessor. The Summa of St. Thomas is still a living and a valuable book.

The following pages cannot claim to be even a good summary of its merits and excellencies; they are simply a few pertinent remarks which will be interesting, it is hoped, and modestly helpful to two classes of readers. For students of theology they will serve as an introduction and an incentive to deeper study of a work which cannot be fully known and appreciated until the general plan and all details of the execution have been examined in a close and reverent inspection of the immortal pages penned by the Angelic Doctor. For those who are not students of theology these sketches will furnish a coveted peep into the treasury where so many riches are said to be stored. To those who are not familiar with the Latin language the

Summa of St. Thomas has been as a sealed book. Translations of the full text into French and English are now in course of publication (see Catholic Encyclopedia, l. c.), and soon will afford our laymen an opportunity to learn more about the great medieval theologian's immortal work. For the benefit of both classes of readers it has been considered opportune to publish the plan of the Summa both in Latin and English. The chart facing page 87 gives in St. Thomas' own words the plan which he followed in writing on God in Himself, and on God as the Alpha and Omega—the beginning and end of all things, especially of rational beings. The same plan, translated into English is given at page 109. These two charts, in their wonderful simplicity and grandeur, are more valuable than any words of explanation and comment. For the benefit of those who desire to know more about St. Thomas and his Summa there is added a short bibliography which will be helpful both to students and general readers. Sincere thanks are due to the Editor of the *Catholic University Bulletin* for the permission, graciously granted, to reprint the following pages.

The Summa and the Catechism.—"The Catholic Church," writes Ozanam, a distinguished modern author, "possesses two incomparable monuments, the Catechism and the *Summa Theologica* [Sum of Theology] of St. Thomas Aquinas; one is for the unlettered [persons of ordinary capacity], the other is for the learned." The truth of this remark is admitted by all theologians who have studied and examined the Summa of St. Thomas after having learned, as we must learn, the outlines of the Christian religion from that dear little book, the Catechism. The Catechism contains a compendious enumeration and short explanations of the principal doctrines of the Christian religion; the Summa of St. Thomas contains a complete list of those same doctrines, explained and developed and defended by the

genius of a Master who is universally recognized as the "Prince of Theologians." Had St. Thomas written nothing but his theology, his name would have been immortal, because nothing new is said in stating that the "Summa Theologica" is universally admitted to be the greatest masterpiece of human genius that the world has ever known. This work contains the cream of St. Thomas' philosophy and theology, being in reality a résumé, or sum, of all his other writings; it represents the perfection of the human mind in its application to the truths of faith, the perfection of Christian philosophy and theology. Those who read it are filled with enthusiastic admiration for the author, and they know not which should be more admired, the grandeur of the plan or the extraordinary genius manifested in the execution of the grand conception.

Lacordaire compares the Summa to the Pyramids.—"Shall I attempt," exclaims Fr. Lacordaire, speaking of St. Thomas, "shall I attempt to describe this man and his work? As well might I attempt to give a perfect idea of the pyramids by telling their height and breadth. If you wish to know the pyramids, be not content with listening to a description; cross the seas; go to the land where so many conquerors have left their footprints; go into the sandy deserts, and there behold standing before you something solemn, something grand, something calm, immutable and profoundly simple—the pyramids!" St. Thomas' Summa, in its majestic simplicity may well be compared to the grandest of the pyramids. We may look upon it with admiring eyes; but no tongue can tell, no pen can adequately describe the wonders of its simple grandeur; it is the masterpiece of a genius who has had neither a superior nor an equal. This great manual of theology comes to us from that much maligned thirteenth century, of which Vaughan writes: "The masterpieces of medieval science were produced at the very time that the

great architectural masterpieces were conceived and at least partially realized."[65] The thirteenth century was an age of construction as well as of destruction. The men of those days upset and destroyed many idols of preceding centuries; but in their stead they constructed imperishable monuments both in the material and in the intellectual world, which to this day excite the unbounded admiration of all lovers of true genius; and the architects of our day would be happy if they could produce something worthy of being compared to the great cathedrals and churches and libraries and town-halls which were conceived and executed by the architects of the Middle Ages. This is in a special manner true of the greatest of all masterpieces of medieval science, the Summa of St. Thomas. No writer of theology has attempted to make an improvement upon this greatest of all manuals of theology. The Church, guided by the Holy Ghost, has held her councils and has issued instructions and definitions to which not even the most enthusiastic admirer of St. Thomas would dare compare his writings when there is question of a teacher that is infallible as well as accurate; but it is a fact well known to theologians that many of those definitions were taken almost verbatim from the works of St. Thomas. Amongst men the Summa has been looked upon as the groundwork and model for all theologies written since his time, and the greatest praise that could be bestowed upon any philosophy or theology consists in saying that the book really deserves to bear on the title-page the inscription: "ad mentem D. Thomæ"—in other words, that it was formed on the model of St. Thomas and really represents his teachings.

When did St. Thomas resolve to write the Summa?—It is impossible to determine at what epoch in his lifetime St. Thomas resolved to write the Summa. We know that in his

[65] "Life and Labours of St. Thomas of Aquin," vol. I, p. 345, n.

infancy those who cared for him were frequently astonished on hearing the child ask, with unexpected seriousness, "What is God?" It may be supposed that thus early in life grace was perfecting nature in this favored child, preparing him gradually to become in due time the most distinguished representative of that science which takes its name from God, of whom it treats.[66] His sojourn at Monte Cassino, his studies at Naples, his reading of the Scriptures and of Aristotle, his study of the "Sentences," in which Peter Lombard gave a compendium of the most important texts of the Fathers relating to theology, his training under Albertus Magnus, who was deeply impressed with the order and accuracy of Aristotle's writings, and who was himself fond of experimenting and of collecting materials for rebuilding the edifice of philosophy and theology—all this tended to prepare St. Thomas for giving to the world what Ozanam calls "a vast synthesis of the moral sciences, in which was unfolded all that could be known of God, of man, and their mutual relations, a truly Catholic philosophy." [67]

Origin of the Summa.—In preceding chapters something was said of the chaos produced at Paris and elsewhere by the introduction of new studies and new methods into the universities. With brilliant professors anxious to obtain fame by giving their names to new systems, with Averroes' commentaries on Aristotle regarded at Paris as the perfection of philosophical knowledge, with rationalism and pantheism publicly taught by professors of a Catholic university, with contempt for old systems and the love of novelty growing in the minds of men, while the sweet and pious mystics of the school of St. Victor sought to induce men to give up "philosophy and empty fallacies" in order to return to the contemplation of heavenly truths and the study of the Scriptures, there was a confusion

[66] Vaughan, op. cit., vol. II, p. 96, n.
[67] Drane, op. cit., p. 430.

that puzzled even learned theologians, and poor beginners could do nothing but follow the systems of their masters.

Influence of Albertus Magnus on St. Thomas.—St. Thomas was a witness of this confusion. He had not suffered as much as others from the disordered state of philosophy and theology, because he had enjoyed the advantage of being instructed under a master whose clear vision was not dimmed by the darkness which surrounded him. Albertus Magnus—"honor to whom honor is due"—pointed out to St. Thomas the dangers and the needs of the thirteenth century, and to him principally, under God, we are indebted for the immortal Summa. Although St. Thomas himself had not experienced the difficulties under which others labored, he knew what those difficulties were, and he resolved with all due humility, and with the hope of assistance from heaven, to write a book that would be a remedy for the confusion and uncertainty which prevented students from forming a clear conception of the doctrines of Christianity.

The Summa written for Beginners.—In making this statement there is no necessity of drawing upon the imagination or of resorting to *ex post facto* suppositions. St. Thomas himself tells us—the declaration will perhaps surprise those who hear it for the first time—that his Summa was written for the special benefit of students; of beginners, as we call them. This declaration was made in the Prologue to the Summa. "We have reflected," he writes, "that beginners in this sacred science find many impediments in those things which have been written by divers authors; partly on account of the multiplication of useless questions, articles and arguments, partly because those things which are necessary for the education of novices are not treated according to the order of discipline (scientific order), but as the exposition of certain books or the occasion of dispute demanded, and partly because the frequent repetitions beget

confusion and disgust in the minds of the learners." Those "impediments," or trials of beginners as we may call them, St. Thomas wished to avoid, hence he adds: "I shall endeavor, trusting to the assistance of heaven, to treat of those things that pertain to this sacred science with brevity and with clearness, in so far as the subject to be treated will permit." [68]

These are St. Thomas' few plain and simple words of introduction to his immortal Sum of all theology. They contain a promise, and never was a promise more faithfully fulfilled. He did not write simply in order to explain or refute books that had been written before his time. He did not wish to make a show of learning by heaping up useless questions and arguments, thereby causing great confusion in the minds of his readers. No, with humble confidence in the Almighty, he intended to use the talents that God had given him to compose a complete, but at the same time brief and lucid, exposition of the truths made known by revelation. In other words, he promised to write a scientifically arranged theology, and he fulfilled his promise in such a manner as to become the Prince and Master of all theologians, with no one to dispute his claim to the title.

Question I. *Sacred Doctrine.*—After these few preliminary remarks, which, by the way, contain more than many a long-winded preface, as prefaces are often written, the Angelic Doctor enters into the consideration of his subject, beginning with an introductory question on Sacred Doctrine, by which term he means either revelation in general, or theology in particular.

Besides philosophy which can be known by reason, he says, revelation is also necessary for the human race, first because without revelation men could know nothing of the supernatural end to which they must tend, and secondly, without revelation even the truths concerning God which could be proved by rea-

[68] Prologue to the Summa.

son, would be known only by a few, after a long time and with the admixture of many errors (Art. 1, cf. Vat. Council, Const. "Dei Filius," c. 2).

What is Scholastic Theology?—The principles of revelation having been once received, the mind of man proceeds to explain them and to draw conclusions from what was revealed. From this results in man's mind theology properly so-called, which is a science, speculative and practical, higher in dignity than the other sciences, deserving to be called wisdom, because the principles from which it proceeds are made known by revelation which manifests God as the highest cause of all things (art. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6). The object, or subject, of this science is God; all other things are treated in it only in so far as they relate to God (art. 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 which have been revealed (art. 8). Revelation is made known to us by the Sacred Scriptures. God, the author of the Scriptures, embraces all things in His infinite mind; and when He deigns to speak to man, if we take into account the intention of God, considering the spiritual or mystical as well as the literal sense of the words, a single text of Scripture may contain a world of meaning (art. 9, 10).

Plan of the Summa.—Having laid down these principles, St. Thomas announces the order he intends to observe in his theology. This is one of the most important features of the Summa. In ten lines of a half column, as the words are printed in the Migne edition of his works, the Angel of the Schools sketches that wonderful plan which introduced unity into all theological treatises. Under three headings he classifies all the parts of dogmatic and moral theology; not one of them can be omitted in a complete theology; it is not necessary to add an-

other, because they embrace everything, they cover the whole field.

General Outlines.—Now, what are those three headings, those three leading ideas? "Since the principal object of sacred doctrine 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 them all, especially of rational beings, we shall treat first, of God; secondly, of the tendency of the rational creature to God, and thirdly, of Christ, who as man is the way by which we tend to God." This is the grand division, these are the general outlines of the "Summa Theologica." 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 under which all that pertains to theology is contained.

Subdivision; 1a Pars.—The First part, of God in Himself and of God as Creator, is subdivided into three tracts. (1) Of those things which pertain to the essence of God, (2) the distinction of persons in God, i. e., on the Trinity, (3) of the procession of creatures from God; under which St. Thomas treats (1) of the production of creatures, (2) of the distinction of creatures, (3) of the preservation and government of creatures. Under the heading of the distinction, he treats of the distinction of creatures, (1) in general and (2) in particular, i. e., of good and evil, of creatures that are purely spiritual (the angels), of creatures that are purely corporeal (the material world), and of man, who is composed of body and spirit. This makes in all nine tracts in the first part: (1) On the essence of the one God. (2) On the Trinity. (3) On the creation. (4) On the distinction of things in general. (5) On the distinction of good and evil. (6) On the angels. (7) On purely corporeal creatures. (8) On Man. (9) On the preservation and government of the world.

2a Pars.—The second part, which treats of the tendency of rational creatures to God, *i. e., of God as He is the end of man,* contains the moral theology of St. Thomas or his treatise on the end of man and on human acts. It is subdivided into two parts known as the 1a 2ae and the 2a 2ae, or the First of the Second, and the Second of the Second. The first five questions of the 2a pars are devoted to proving that man's last end, or his beatitude, consists in the possession of God. Man attains to that end or deviates from it by human acts, of which he treats, first in general (in all but the first five questions of the prima secundae), secondly, in particular (in the whole of the 2a 2ae).

The treatise on human acts in general is divided into two parts, (1) on human acts in themselves, (2) on the principles or causes of those acts. Of the acts performed by man some are peculiar to him as man, others are common to him and the lower animals; hence St. Thomas speaks, (1) of human acts, (2) of the passions. Here I may pause to remark that in these two tracts, St. Thomas, following Aristotle, gives the most perfect description and the keenest analysis of the movements of man's mind and heart that ever came from the pen of man.

The principles (or causes) of human acts are *intrinsic* or *extrinsic*. The intrinsic principles are the *faculties* of the soul and *habits*. The faculties of the soul were explained in the first part, in treating of the soul of man; hence in the prima secundae St. Thomas considers habits, first, in general, then, in particular, i. e., the virtues and vices, in explaining which his power of analysis is again displayed in a remarkable manner. The extrinsic principles of human acts are *the devil* who tempts us, and *God,* who instructs us by His *laws* and moves us by His *grace*. Of the temptation of the demons St. Thomas treated in the first part, when he was explaining God's manner of govern-

ing the world. The prima secundae closes with the treatise on laws and on grace.

2a 2ae. The second part of the second treats of the virtues and vices in particular. In it St. Thomas treats first of those things which pertain to *all men,* no matter what may be their station in life; secondly, of those things which pertain to *some men* only. Things that pertain to all men are reduced by St. Thomas to seven headings: faith, hope and charity—the three *theological virtues*—prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance —the four *cardinal* or principal moral virtues. Under each title St. Thomas, in order as he himself tells us, to avoid frequent repetitions, treats not only of the virtue itself, but also of the vices opposed to it, of the commandment given to practise it, and of the gift of the Holy Ghost which corresponds to it. Under the second heading—of those things which pertain to some men only—St. Thomas treats first of the *graces freely given* by Almighty God, to certain individuals for the good of the Church, such as the gift of tongues, prophecy, the power to work miracles, etc. Secondly, of the *active and contemplative life.* Thirdly, of *particular states* in life, and of the duties of those who are in different stations, especially of bishops and religious.

3a *Pars.*—In the third part of his Summa, St. Thomas treats of our Blessed Redeemer and of the benefits which he confers upon man; hence the three tracts; first, on the *Incarnation* and on what our Saviour did and suffered when He was on earth; second, on the *Sacraments,* which were instituted by our Saviour and have their efficacy from His merits and sufferings; and the third, on the *end of the world,* the resurrection of our bodies, judgment, the punishment of the wicked, and the everlasting happiness of those who through the merits of Christ are brought back to the bosom of God.

These are the grand outlines of the Summa, which was the first, and which remains to this day the most perfect, scientifically arranged theology that was ever written. I have said nothing of the subdivisions under each grand heading; they bear the impress of the same all-embracing and penetrating mind which conceived the general plan. The Summa contains 38 tracts, 631 questions and about 3,000 articles, in which more than 10,000 objections are answered. Take up any one of these articles, and by referring to the beginning of the treatise you can see at a glance what place it occupies in the general plan, which embraces all that can be known of *God,* of *man,* and of *their mutual relations.* This scientific arrangement of questions is one of the most prominent features of the Summa, and the making out of this plan was in itself a greater benefit to theology than anything that had been done before or has been done since the time of St. Thomas. Writers who preceded St. Thomas had deserved well of religion and of the Church; they had written wisely and well, and to some of those who immediately preceded him or were contemporary with him must be given the credit of having prepared the way for the Summa by collecting the materials which he moulded into one vast synthesis; but they had not written a scientific theology. Those who came after St. Thomas have deemed it an honor and a pleasure to follow the order of the Summa. They may have added some new developments or cited some facts and definitions which came after the thirteenth century, but they have never dreamed of attempting to write a better theology. St. Thomas remains the master and the model; the nearer they approach to him, the better right they have to be considered good theologians.

It must not be supposed, however, that all the excellencies of the Summa have been enumerated when the general plan

has been pointed out and a short list has been given of the principal questions treated in it. St. Thomas was not only a great architect, he was also a practical builder and he attended with the greatest diligence to every detail of the grand edifice which he constructed. Reading over his works we involuntarily exclaim: Verily Pope John XXII expressed a truth when he said that St. Thomas wrought as many miracles as he wrote articles.

The Style of the Summa.—Let us consider, for instance, the style of his writings. The style of St. Thomas is something unique and inimitable; it is a most extraordinary combination of brevity, accuracy and completeness. The Scholastics generally were not so careful of style as were their predecessors in the learned world; they were more solicitous about their thoughts than about the language in which their ideas were expressed. Hence the lamentations of John of Salisbury, who was a finished classical scholar and a writer of elegantly polished letters.[69] St. Thomas' style is a medium between the rough expressiveness of the ordinary Scholastic and the almost fastidious elegance of John of Salisbury. We know that his hymns in honor of the Blessed Sacrament are incomparably grand and beautiful. Santeuil said he would give all the verses he ever wrote for the following words of the "Verbum Supernum," which immediately precede the "O Salutaris":

Se nascens dedit socium
Convescens in edulium
Se moriens in pretium
Se regnans dat in præmium.[70]

[69] Drane, op. cit. pp, 358-359.

[70] Translation by Marquis of Bute:

"In birth, man's Fellowman was he,
His Meat, while sitting at the Board
He died, his Ransomer to be
He reigns to be his Great Reward."

But I am speaking of his style of writing on philosophy and theology, concerning which Pope Innocent declared that, with the exception of the canonical writings, the works of St. Thomas surpass all others in accuracy of expression. In a few well chosen words he tells all that one wishes to know on a question, and after reading all that others have written, students return to St. Thomas, who always gives something satisfactory. No one can appreciate this without actually reading the writings of St. Thomas. For the sake of comparison I should like to see some modern authors attempt to put into a given space as much accurate and satisfactory information as St. Thomas usually gives in the space of one article. Bossuet, Lacordaire and Monsabré, three of the greatest of authors, studied and admired St. Thomas' style, and in reading their discourses we can recognize the influence of the Angelic Doctor. Writers on philosophy and theology have studied his style; they could not imitate it, because it is *sui generis,* possessing an excellence which makes it inimitable. Cajetan knew his style better than any of his disciples, yet Cajetan is beneath St. Thomas in clearness and accuracy of expression, in depth and solidity of judgment.

Sound Judgment.—This soundness and soberness of judgment is another characteristic of St. Thomas. It is a well known fact that St. Thomas was noted for his singular calmness and meekness; even under the most trying circumstances he never lost his temper, notwithstanding the many provocations he met with in his life as a student, as a professor, and as a champion of the religious orders against the malicious attacks of William of St. Amour. This quiet self-possession runs through all his writings, so much so that every candid reader, even though he paid no attention to the supernatural meekness and humility of a saintly disciple of Jesus, would be compelled

to admire him as a perfect specimen of the philosopher with a well-balanced mind. St. Thomas was full of what we take delight in praising as good, sound sense. He and Albertus Magnus introduced new methods into the schools. Besides praising and making known the works of Aristotle, upon which some looked with suspicion, they insisted on the necessity of experiment and observation in an age when men too often contented themselves with reading what had been written by others.

In philosophy, says St. Thomas, arguments from authority are of secondary importance (2 Sent. Dist. 14, Art. 2, ad. 1); experiment, and reason the thing out for yourself, and do not swear by the words of a master. "Philosophy does not consist in knowing what men said but in knowing the truth." We now understand the importance of this principle; perhaps we should not have understood it so well, and might not have proposed it so courageously had we lived in the middle of the thirteenth century.[71] The good judgment of St. Thomas is displayed in a remarkable manner in settling disputed questions. If he tells you that he is certain of the truth of his solution, you may rest assured that his arguments are convincing; otherwise he will simply give an opinion, stating that it is probable or more probable than the opposite; or he will admit that the question is doubtful, and then he suspends judgment. He does not hesitate at times to say plainly: This is something about which we know nothing, differing in this from many of his time and of our times who foolishly imagine that it is unphilosophical to say: "I don't know." On reflection we know that judgments should be formed in accordance with the nature of the arguments adduced, but as a matter of fact very few writers observe this rule. St. Thomas observed it invariably, and for this reason he has always been considered a safe guide, because he judged always in justice and in truth.

[71] See Æterni Patris.

No Excellence Without Labor.—It would be a mistake to suppose that St. Thomas attained to this perfection of scholastic writing without an effort, and that he affords an exception to the general rule expressed in the old saying: "There is no excellence without labor." He was indeed 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. Some years ago the Abbé Ucceli published a facsimile of the original manuscript of the "Summa Contra Gentes." The text was corrected and changed in almost as many places as it remained intact, thus proving that even the genius of St. Thomas was not dispensed from the law of labor in attaining to excellence.

Another remarkable feature of the Summa is St. Thomas' wonderful knowledge of the Scriptures, of the Councils of the Church, of the Works of the Fathers and the writings of the philosophers. He seems to have read everything and to have understood everything. Father Daniel d'Agusta once pressed him to say what he considered the greatest grace he had ever received from God (sanctifying grace, of course, excepted). "I think, that of having understood whatever I have read," he replied, after a few minutes of reflection. St. Antoninus says in his Life, that "he remembered everything he had once read, so that his mind was like a huge library." Whoever has read the Summa will at once admit the truth of these statements.

Scripture.—St. Thomas must have known by heart the greater portion of the Scriptures. There is scarcely an article of the Summa that does not contain quotations from the Scriptures, and frequently he takes pains to explain the meaning of obscure passages. It must be borne in mind that he wrote at a time when there was no such book as a "Concordance," or a "Thesaurus Biblicus," or "Divine Armory of the Holy Scrip-

tures," or other books of that kind which make it easy for writers of our times to fill their pages with quotations from the holy writings. Not only did he know the Scriptures themselves, he was also acquainted with the Commentaries on the sacred text; and whenever it was necessary or useful, he was prepared to give the different opinions of various authors, sometimes refuting their interpretations, sometimes leaving the reader free to choose for himself from several interpretations, all of which were considered equally good. The bare enumeration of texts quoted or explained in the Summa fills eighty small-print columns in the Migne edition of his works, and it is supposed by many that St. Thomas learned the Scriptures by heart while he was imprisoned in the Castle of St. Giovanni, shortly after he received the habit of the Order of St. Dominic.

Tradition.—He was also filled with the deepest veneration for all the traditions of the Church. He was a man of intense faith, and no arguments had greater weight with him than those taken from the *consuetudo ecclesiæ*—the practice of the Church, which, he said, should prevail over the authority of any Doctor (2a 2ae, Q. X. A. 12). This same spirit of faith is manifested in his quotations from the Acts of Councils, the Definitions of the Roman Pontiffs, and the works of the Holy Fathers. His acquaintance with these important sources of theological arguments is astonishing, especially when we remember that books were very rare and precious in his time—two centuries before the invention of printing. In the "Summa Theologica" he quotes from nineteen Councils, forty-one Popes, and fifty-two Fathers of the Church or learned Doctors. Among the Fathers, his favorite is St. Augustine, whose opinions, however, he does not always adopt, when St. Augustine puts forth a private opinion and is not bearing witness to a doctrine that was handed down from the ancients. In depart-

ing from St. Augustine's opinion he usually, through respect for that Father, refrains from mentioning his name, preferring that his readers should not be unnecessarily reminded of the fact that even St. Augustine made some mistakes.

Philosophers.—In the introduction to the Summa, St. Thomas lays down the principle that a theologian can make use of the writings of philosophers, not indeed as if theology needed them, but because she has the right to use them as her servants (Q. 1, Art. 5 ad. 2) in order to illustrate the truth of faith (Q. 1, Art. 8, ad. 2). Acting on this principle he extensively used the works of the pagan philosophers and poets in order to render more intelligible and attractive his explanations of Christian doctrines and practices. In the Summa he quotes from the writings of forty-six philosophers and poets, Aristotle, Plato and Boëthius being his favorite authorities. From Aristotle he learned that love of order and accuracy of expression which are the most conspicuous features of the Summa. From Boethius he learned that Aristotle's works could be used without detriment to Christianity; and in the works of that philosopher he found several exact definitions which he adopted, and which are still used in the schools of theology (def. of Person and of Eternity). He did not follow Boethius in his vain attempt to reconcile Plato and Aristotle. St. Thomas saw that the teachings of those two great philosophers were not the same, especially in regard to the nature of universal ideas and the union of the soul and body in man. He adopted Aristotle's doctrines on those subjects, and in general the Stagyrite was his master; but the elevation and grandeur of St. Thomas' conceptions, and the majestic dignity which characterizes all his writings speak to us of the great and sublime Plato, who would have been greater than Aristotle, had he condescended to descend to facts rather than to soar aloft, even unto the Divinity, on the wings of

sublime theories. St. Thomas is as sublime as Plato, and more reliable than Aristotle, because Aristotle lacked the light of Christian faith, which alone can safely guide the human mind through the intricacies and obscurities of philosophy. St. Thomas then, is the Christian Aristotle, the greatest of all philosophers, and the Prince of Theologians. The importance and value of his Summa, which I have very imperfectly described, pointing out in a general way a few of its excellencies, were recognized and admitted as soon as it became known, and shortly after his death the Summa supplanted the Book of Sentences of Peter Lombard which for years had been the favorite text-book in the theological schools of the Middle Ages.

Popes, Universities and Religious Orders.—Roman Pontiffs, the universities and religious Orders vied with one another in sounding the praises of the Angelic Doctor. The universities and many religious orders bound themselves to follow his doctrine of which Pope Innocent VI said: "Those who followed it never deviated from the path of truth; those who attacked it were always suspected of error." Heretics (Beza, Bucer) unwillingly proclaimed his greatness by boasting that if his works were removed they could destroy the Catholic Church. "The hope indeed was vain, but the testimony has its value," writes Leo. XIII (Æt. Patris).

COUNCILS: *Council of Trent.*—The greatest praise that can be bestowed upon St. Thomas is to be found in the history of the General Councils of the Church. "In the Councils of Lyons, Vienne, Florence, and in the Vatican Council," writes Leo XIII, "you might say that St. Thomas was present in the deliberations and decrees of the Fathers and, as it were, presided over them, contending against the errors of the Greeks, the heretics, the rationalists, with overpowering force and the happiest results. And it was an honor reserved to St. Thomas alone, and

shared by none of the other Doctors of the Church, that the Fathers of Trent in their hall of assembly decided to place on the altar side by side with the Holy Scriptures and the Decrees of the Roman Pontiffs the Summa of St. Thomas, to seek in it counsel, arguments and decisions for their purpose" (*ib*).

Vatican Council.—I have heard it related, on very good authority, that at the Vatican Council the Bishop who was considered one of the best theologians among the assembled Fathers was Mgr. Gill, Archbishop of Saragossa, afterwards Cardinal. Pius IX spoke of him as "the oracle of the council," and always asked him to give an opinion before the decrees were put to a final vote. The Archbishop afterwards, replying to the congratulations of his brethren in religion, humbly protested that if he had said anything of value during the sessions of the Council, all the glory should be attributed to St. Thomas "because," he said, "whatever I may know about theology I learned from my two favorite books, the Summa of St. Thomas and the treatise 'De Locis Theologicis' of Melchoir Canus [a disciple of St. Thomas]."

Nothing more than this simple fact is required to prove the wisdom of Pope Leo XIII in calling upon his children throughout the world to study the works and the method of St. Thomas. The reasons for this action of the Supreme Pontiff are set forth at length in the Encyclical "Æterni Patris." Permit me to remark that, even from what has been said in these imperfect sketches of St. Thomas' influence on religious thought, it is evident that in his works are to be found the principles which would destroy the principal intellectual evils of our times, Rationalism, Indifferentism, and the foolish belief that there is a conflict between faith and science. St. Thomas' career and every page of his writings are a contradiction and a standing refutation of those errors. His works, indeed, should not be

studied now as they would have been used in the thirteenth century; they should be adapted to the needs of the twentieth century. His principles and his methods are suited to all times, because, as Father Lacordaire remarks, granting that he has not foreseen and refuted all errors, he has said all that was necessary to refute them.[72]

Should the Summa be Considered a Miracle.—If you ask: How did it happen that this man, living six hundred years ago, wrote a theology suited to the needs of all times? I answer, in the words of Pope John XXII: "Doctrina ejus non potuit esse sine miraculo (His learning cannot be explained without admitting a miracle)."

[72] Vallet, "Histoire de la Philosophie" (Paris, 1886), p. 246.

CHAPTER VII

SPECIMEN PAGES FROM THE SUMMA THEOLOGICA OF ST. THOMAS

In the foregoing chapter an attempt was made to give a general view of the Summa of St. Thomas. The broad outlines of this great monument of human genius were pointed out in a hurried description; we did not pause to consider the many beautiful details of the grand structure. We passed along the street as it were and cast a glance of admiration at the vast cathedral which adorned it; we had no time to enter in order to see the beauty of the sacred edifice from within its hallowed walls. We beheld from afar the magnificent proportions of a gigantic structure; we did not approach in order to inspect more closely the everlasting work of the immortal builder. Coming face to face with the monument erected by a great genius we were filled with admiration and astonishment; recovering from those first impressions we now wish to gratify the laudable curiosity which prompts us to examine more closely the edifice which for more than six hundred years has excited the admiration of all who love the grand, the good, the beautiful and the true. However strongly we may covet the honor of being reputed a good *cicerone,* we find it necessary at the very beginning of this pilgrimage to the cathedral erected by St. Thomas, to make a declaration which is never made by the professional guide.

The Cicerone's Humble Declaration.—I cannot promise to point out and explain every object of interest in the edifice.

To appreciate the beauties of the Summa one must spend not only an hour or a day, but weeks and months, yes, years, in contemplating the grandeur of the general plan and the perfection of the details of this remarkable production of the great architect of theology. We must, of necessity, content ourselves with the selection of a few specimens of singular strength and beauty which will serve to give us an insight into the mind of the architect. In other words—and here we lay aside the metaphor—it is our intention to give in this article some specimens of St. Thomas' doctrine and method, choosing from different parts of the Summa principles which will show that faith does not hamper reason, but that reason in a Christian philosopher, enlightened and guided by faith, may soar to the summit of intelligent research, good sense and sound judgment. The Summa represents the perfection of reason applied to the truths of faith in the manner in which it should be used, viz., as the servant of the higher truth which God deigned to reveal to men. For that very reason the Angelic Doctor is the greatest of Christian philosophers and the Prince of Theologians; he is the giant beside whom other philosophers and theologians appear as mere striplings, great and useful though they may be and are in their own sphere; thus it will be instructive as well as interesting to know something of his method in treating questions of philosophy and theology.

Difficulty of Choosing Specimens.—We are well aware that any one attempting to give what might be called illustrations from the Summa must contend with two serious difficulties. First, he meets with what the French so aptly term *l'embarras du choix;* when there are so many excellencies it is difficult to choose one or a few as the objects of our special study and admiration. In the second place, St. Thomas' works were written in Latin, and in a style which was peculiarly his own; for

lucidity, brevity and expressiveness nothing like it has ever been known. It is our firm conviction that all the great professors of Yale, Harvard, Oxford and Cambridge could never reproduce in English a page of St. Thomas which would do justice to the original. The mere mention of these two difficulties will be equivalent to a request that the reader kindly bear in mind, first, that the specimens given are only a few out of many that might have been chosen to illustrate St. Thomas' doctrine; secondly, that expositions of his doctrine given in English fall far short of the beauty, strength, accuracy and completeness of the Latin in which St. Thomas expressed, with the greatest ease and apparently without effort, the sublimest doctrines of theology.

Division of the Summa Recalled.—Let us begin this investigation by recalling the grand division of the "Summa Theologica" in its three parts. The first treats of God—of God in Himself, one nature in three persons; of God as the Author and Ruler of the universe. The second treats of the tendency of the rational creature to God; in other words, of God as the end of man, and of human acts in general (1a 2ae) and in particular (2a 2ae). The third treats of Christ, who as man is the way by which we tend to God: in other words, of God as Redeemer, of the sacraments, and of the eternal life to which Christ conducts men. This division is recalled because we intend, in choosing specimens of St. Thomas' doctrine to follow the order of the Summa.

Principles of Pedagogy.—Yielding to an inclination which is entirely in accordance with the fitness of things, we shall select for the first specimen St. Thomas' principles on *teaching.* In his commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew, St. Thomas has sketched the character of an ideal Christian *Doctor,* of one who teaches the truths of religion. The perfect Doctor, he says,

is one whose life as well as whose doctrine is light. Three things are necessary to him: *stability,* that he may never deviate from the truth; *clearness,* that he may teach without obscurity; and *purity of intention,* that he may seek God's glory and not his own (in cap. v. *Matt*). In the Prologue to the Summa and in several articles in the body of the work he lays down principles concerning teachers in general. The few words which he wrote by way of introduction to the *Summa,* giving his reasons for composing a manual of theology, are a mine of information concerning his principles on pedagogy, or the art of teaching the young.

Prologue to the Summa.—"We have considered that beginners in this sacred science find many impediments in those things which have been written by various authors; partly, on account of the multiplication of useless questions, articles and arguments; partly, because those things which are necessary for the education of novices [i. e., *beginners*] are not treated systematically, but as the exposition of certain books or the occasion of disputation demanded; and partly because the frequent repetitions beget confusion and disgust in the minds of learners."

Hints to Teachers. Avoid Useless Questions.—Do not overload the mind of the beginner with a multitude of useless questions; choose those that are primary and fundamental; give the student a clear knowledge of them, bearing in mind the capacity of the pupil; establish them by a few good, strong arguments, if proofs are necessary, and then pass on to something more particular, without consuming valuable time in dealing with hair-splitting arguments which the beginner cannot understand, and in the study of which there is little profit and much annoyance. These remarks of St. Thomas were a quiet criticism of a Scholasticism which was carried to excess, but they express a general rule which should be observed in all institutions of learning, from the highest university down to the lowest primary school. Neglect of this rule has

often resulted in thrusting upon the community a class of so-called graduates, with a smattering of everything and a real knowledge of nothing—graduates who made our fathers sigh, sometimes not without reason, for the old-time schoolhouses and the days of "the three Rs."

Order.—In the next place, books for beginners should be written with due regard for scientific order, which is conducive to clearness and perception and helpful to the memory. The importance of this canon will be readily admitted by all who have ever attempted to "straighten out" the ideas of one who was not from the beginning of his education trained to think and study with order. Theology was a confused mass of dogmas, disputes and objections until St. Thomas introduced order into the chaos. As it was with theology so has it been, so shall it be, with other branches of knowledge, if due attention is not given to the scientific distribution of the subjects treated. By paying attention to this rule St. Thomas made it possible to take in at one glance the whole field of Catholic Theology.

Avoid Repetitions.—Thirdly, avoid repetitions which, if they be frequent and unnecessary, excite disgust and cause confusion. For those who are very young it is necessary to repeat the same thing frequently in order that it may be indelibly impressed on their minds; but there is a limit to this necessity. Many a boy has left school in disgust because he was not allowed to advance, but was held back, waiting perhaps for dull or lazy classmates, and had to listen for weeks or months to the same old story. But, we must not enter into the details of school or college life; we merely wished to call attention to a principle which guided St. Thomas when he wrote the Summa. The three rules which have been mentioned he followed to the letter, writing "with brevity and clearness" on those things which pertain to sacred doctrine, and that is one of the reasons why his Summa is still regarded as

the model manual of theology. The advanced student can find in it material for deep and mature thought, and beginners who have read its pages are unanimous in declaring that it is the most satisfactory and the clearest of all theologies.

Teaching and Learning.—In the first article, 117th question of the first part, St. Thomas asks the question: Can one man teach another? After rejecting the theories of Averroes and Plato—opinions which were founded on their false systems with regard to the union of soul and body—the Angelic Doctor gives his own answer to the question. One man can teach another, and the teacher can be truly said to impart knowledge to the mind of the pupil by causing him actually to know that which before he had only the capacity to know. Of the effects produced by an external agent, some are caused by an external agent alone, some are caused by an external agent and also by a cause operating from within. Thus a house contributes nothing to its own erection; the work is all done by an external agent, the builder. But health is caused in a sick person sometimes by the medicine which he takes and sometimes by the recuperative powers of nature itself. When two causes cooperate in the production of such effects it must be remembered that the principal cause is not the external agent, but the internal one; the external agent is the assistant, furnishing means and aid which the internal agent makes use of to produce the desired effect. The physician does not produce health; health is produced by nature aided by the physician and his remedies.

This is what takes place when one man teaches another. Knowledge in the pupil must result from the activity of his own mind. Sometimes, without the aid of a teacher, he can acquire knowledge by his own exertions, applying the native force of his mind by which he naturally knows the first principles of all knowledge. Sometimes he is taught by another, but even then the mind

of the pupil is the principal cause, the teacher is only the assistant, stating universal propositions from which others follow, or giving examples and similitudes which readily bring to the mind things of which the pupil had not thought, or showing the connexion between principles and conclusions which the pupil would not have noticed if the master had not called his attention to them.

This, according to St. Thomas, is how a master causes a pupil to know things. It is not like the process of pouring water into a vessel. He is not simply the receiver of good things from without; he is a living agent, and all the teachers in the world can do him no good unless they adopt methods which will stimulate the activity of his mind. No one can know for another, each one must know for himself; teachers are only intended to excite the latent energies of our minds and to help us in knowing. It is not well to make things too easy for learners; if the mind of the pupil is not called upon to digest and assimilate the food administered by the teacher, the knowledge communicated, often with great pains on the part of the teacher, will be—to use a common expression—like water poured into a sieve. If you wish to know a good teacher, and if you wish to know a well-written book intended to stimulate healthy activity in the minds of students, read the Summa of St. Thomas.

St. Thomas and the Necessity of Revelation.—From the prologue let us pass to the first article of the Summa, where St. Thomas treats of the necessity of revelation for the knowledge of natural truths. Because all men by the light of reason can know some things, Rationalists and infidels say that men can know all things without the aid of revelation. Catholic theologians were not slow to answer that men, as they have been and as they are, cannot without revelation have a perfect knowledge even of those truths which come within the scope of their natural capacity for knowing. In their zeal for the defence of God's teaching some

theologians went so far as to assert that without the aid of revelation, which had been handed down by tradition in the human family, men cannot have a certain and perfect knowledge of any supersensible truth. This was an exaggeration, and Traditionalism has been condemned by the Vicar of Christ on earth. (Greg. XVI, Sept. 8, 1840. See Denzinger, *Enchir.*, n. 1622).

St. Thomas pointed out the medium between Rationalism and Traditionalism. In the 88th question of the first part of the Summa he proves that man can know supersensible and immaterial things, and even God Himself. But that knowledge would not suffice for the human race in its present condition in order that all might have a perfect knowledge of natural truths, especially of truths that pertain to God. The reader's attention may here be called to the fact that the Fathers of the Vatican Council in defining the necessity of revelation, used almost the same words employed by St. Thomas in the first article of the "Summa Theologica," and in the fourth chapter, first book, of the "Summa Contra Gentes." The Vatican Council says that the revelation of natural truths is necessary in order that they may be known "by all men, without delay, with certitude and without admixture of error." St. Thomas had written in the "Summa Theologica": without revelation these truths could be known "only by a few, after a long time, and with the admixture of many errors." These words are a repetition of what he wrote in the "Summa Contra Gentes," where he says that God in His goodness proposed those natural truths to be believed by men that thus "all might easily have the knowledge of God without doubt and without error." Now, how does he prove his thesis? Without revelation the truths of natural religion would have been known only by a few for three reasons: first, some men are unfit for study: hence they could never attain to the summit of knowledge which consists in knowing God. Again, some are too much occupied with temporal

affairs; hence they would not have the time to acquire knowledge of the sublimest truths. Lastly, some men are lazy, and although God has implanted in them a natural desire to know Him, they would never undergo the labor which is the price that must be paid for the knowledge of metaphysical truths.

Even those few would acquire this knowledge only after a long time, because (*a*) the truths of which we are speaking are profound truths, and (*b*) a long preparation is necessary before men can understand them, and (*c*) whilst men are young the passions prevent the attentive consideration of sublime truths. But even after long preparation and study those few would still be in doubt and be subject to error. We are all liable to err. Knowing this and knowing that the greatest philosophers dispute about important questions, and often mix in with the truth things that are false or doubtful or only half proved, where are we to find amongst men that freedom from error and doubt without which our knowledge even of natural truths will be very imperfect and unsatisfactory? Consequently, revelation is necessary in order that those truths may be known by all, without delay, with certainty and without error. Comments would destroy the beauty and the force of those words. I simply ask: Where can we find anything to equal the conciseness and the completeness of that article?

Ontologism and Kantism.—St. Thomas is scarcely less admirable in his refutation of Ontologism. This name has been given to a system which teaches that the first idea formed in the human mind is a direct knowledge of God. Without that idea we can have no scientific knowledge; with that idea we can have a certain and infallible knowledge of all things. We do not see the essence of God as He is in Himself, but we see that essence as it represents all things, which were first conceived in the mind of God and were then created in accordance with the idea of the Divine Architect of the world.

This system was taught by Malebranche in the seventeenth century, and afterwards, with various modifications unnecessary to explain, by Gioberti and others, notably in our own times by Professor Ubaghs, a great light of the University of Louvain.

It cannot be denied that if the propositions of the Ontologists could be admitted we should have a ready answer to the objections made by sceptics against the scientific value of metaphysical knowledge. We have knowledge, it could be answered, of truths that are universal, immutable, necessary and eternal, because we see them in the eternal and immutable Author of all things and all truth. Kant and his disciples could no longer claim that our metaphysical knowledge is destitute of a scientific basis. Although the senses do not manifest the eternal, necessary and immutable truth of first principles, e. g., of the principle of contradiction; a thing cannot be and not be at the same time, or the whole is greater than its part, nevertheless we see these truths in God when He is seen by our minds. Such a defence of metaphysics, however, is based upon an exaggeration of the truth, and Ontologism was condemned by a decree of the Inquisition dated Sept. 18th, 1861. Verily there is nothing new under the sun. St. Thomas had refuted Ontologism six hundred years before the date of the decree. In the 11th article, question 12 of the first part of the Summa, he proves that no one can see the essence of God in this life; this vision is reserved for the blessed who always see Him face to face. In the 5th article, question 84 of the same part, he shows that there is no necessity of saying that we see all things *in God* as in a mirror; because we have our intellects, which are rays emanating from the Divine Light, distinct from God and caused by Him. What the intellect manifests is truth, and we know it to be the truth because of the evidence and light which accompany the manifestation in our minds (*vide* 1 P., qq. 16 and 17). We know the truths: two and two make four; the whole is

greater than its part; there is no effect without a cause, etc., because we *see* them. There is no more necessity of proving these truths than there is of proving the reality of the stone or brick falling on one's head. If you analyze and apply those principles, they will reveal the Source of all truth, as rays make known the sun from which they emanate, but they are not God, they are participations of the eternal Truth which enlightens all men. St. Thomas goes farther, and in the 2a 2ae, question 173, first article, he anticipates an answer which the Ontologists might make, and explodes the distinction on which it is based. In the time of St. Thomas some writers thought to explain the gift of prophecy by saying that prophets see God to whom the past, present and future are one. When they are asked, as we ask the Ontologists: In what then do they differ from the blessed in heaven? the answer was: They see God not as He is in Himself, but in as much as He contains representations of future events. Worthless distinction, says St. Thomas. You cannot see things as they are represented in the essence of God without seeing the essence of God. The representations or ideas of things (*rationes rerum*) in God are the essence of God as it represents things, past, present or future. If God were composed of parts we might see one part without seeing the other, but whoever is looking directly at a thing that is simple sees either all of it or nothing. The participations of the one great Truth are manifold; hence we can see one without seeing the other or without seeing the source; but whoever sees these truths in the essence sees also the source, unless words have lost all meaning. Outside of these principles, which St. Thomas proposed as calmly as if he were writing the first page of an A B C book, there is no solid refutation of many of the high-sounding *isms* which make life burdensome to students of philosophy in our days.

St. Thomas and Interpretation of Scripture.—Another manifestation of St. Thomas' good judgment is to be found in those

passages where he lays down rules for the interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures. These rules are explained at some length in the Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on the study of the Scriptures, and a glance at the document will show that they are taken in great part from the writings of St. Thomas. In the course of the document the learned Pontiff frequently refers to his favorite theologian by the use of such expressions as, "St. Thomas being our guide"—"St. Thomas here holds the first place"—"St. Thomas teaches"—"This course was pursued by that great theologian Thomas Aquinas," etc. In thus quoting and following St. Thomas the Pope does not neglect other guides and other rules; they are, as it were, embodied in St. Thomas, because he may be regarded as the personification of the wisdom of preceding times, being in a special manner filled with reverence for the authority of the Church and for the writings of the Fathers, the two tribunals to which disputes on the the Scriptures must be referred. It is not to be expected that we should make a complete list of the rules laid down by St. Thomas for the study of the Scriptures, but we take pleasure in calling attention to a few principles which he proposed for the guidance of interpreters in cases of difficulty and doubt. The importance of these principles is very strongly urged in the Pope's Encyclical, and although they are very plain and simple, it must be confessed that they have not always been observed by those who should have applied them. Attacks made at different times by so-called scientists against the first chapter of Genesis have called forth many able books in defence of the revealed truth, but the defenders did not always observe that moderation and calmness which would have ensured uniformity of method in the defence, and which would have precluded the necessity of changing with the variations of science. St. Thomas treated those very questions and found it necessary to discuss many theories offered in explanation of the words of Genesis. He

was not in the least disturbed by any of them and would not have been disturbed if the systems proposed had been twenty times as numerous as they were, because he was always guided by a good rule found in St. Augustine, based upon strong faith and good common sense. In such questions, he wrote (1 P., q. 68, art. 1), two things are to be borne in mind: first, that the Scriptures teach nothing but the truth. Secondly, since passages of Scripture can sometimes be explained in different ways, let no one hold one explanation so tenaciously that he would not be prepared to give it up if a better explanation were offered. The first part of this rule—about the truth of the Scriptures—had it been known and observed, would have prevented many cases of scriptural heart disease which at times afflicted certain timorous believers who foolishly became excited by reason of the discovery of some scientist. Let scientific men continue their investigations and excavations. When they are prepared to tell us just what science teaches, not what so-called scientists say, then we shall be prepared to meet them and to revise, if necessary, not the Scriptures —because there can be no opposition between true science and the words of the Holy Ghost—but our interpretation of Scripture. Necessity for such revisions will not be very frequent, because it has happened and will happen again, that what was flashed over the wires as a new discovery of science was simply the hastily concocted theory of some unbeliever, who was over-anxious to prove that there was no God and no hell. There may be apparent contradictions between science and Genesis; but the Catholic Church is to last until the end of time, and she can wait until science has determined what is certain before deciding what interpretations of Genesis are to be abandoned.

The second part of St. Thomas' rule—about various interpretations—had it been known and observed, would have prevented two grave evils: first, the disappointment and vexation of those

who see their pet theories overturned; secondly, the scoffing of unbelievers, when they see theologians offering first one explanation and then another in defending the faith. St. Thomas lays down as a general rule that the defence of faith should not be based upon the reasons or theories advanced by different schools of theology. To outsiders what the Church teaches and what a theologian of the Church teaches are one and the same thing; and if they overthrow the theologian they think they have overthrown the faith and the Church. We who are of the faith know that theologians may make mistakes, whilst the Holy Ghost cannot teach error; even St. Thomas might fall, but the Church built upon the rock shall stand forever. St. Thomas, true to his principles, allowed the greatest latitude in interpreting the first chapter of Genesis, and any other part of Scripture, when the sense of the words had not been determined by the authority of the Church. He favors the system which says that the days of creation are to be taken in the ordinary sense of the words, but he proposes his theory simply as an opinion, and does not reject the system of St. Augustine, who said that by the morning was meant the knowledge of things which the Angels have in the Word, i. e., in the beatific vision, and by the evening the knowledge of things which the Angels have outside of the Word, i. e., through infused ideas, He also mentions various theories about the light, the firmament, the condition of plants, trees and animals, when they were created, etc., but he had too much foresight and theological balance to tie himself down to any one theory; and thus the truth of the Scriptures remained intact whilst men and their theories appeared for a while on the scene and then passed away.

The specimens of St. Thomas' doctrine thus far given were taken from the first part of the Summa. We must now pass on to inspect other parts of his great work.

In the first place it may be remarked in a general way that in

the 1a 2ae and 2a 2ae of St. Thomas there is more genuine moral theology, as a scientific knowledge of men and of their acts, than can be found in the hundreds of manuals or compendiums which have been written since the sixteenth century, and which can claim little merit except in so far as they apply to ever-changing times and circumstances the principles proposed by St. Thomas or by other great Scholastics.

Human Acts, Virtues and Vices, Original Sin, Law, Grace.—His explanation of human acts and of those things which affect human acts; his definition and classification of the virtues and vices; his most sensible and most satisfactory explanation of original sin; the depth and accuracy of his treatise on laws; the sublimity and acumen of his tract on grace, have made the *prima secundae* the source and fountain-head from which flow the principles that should guide all those who wish to point out the true doctrine of the tendency of the rational creature to God.

Best Form of Government.—In the 1a 2ae, question 105, article first, we find St. Thomas' opinion on the best form of government. If we consider merely the words he uses it would be said that he pronounces in favor of a limited monarchy; but if we go below the words and consider the principles on which his conclusion is based, it will appear that the Angelic Doctor was not averse to a republic, and I believe that if he were living to-day he would be an ardent supporter of our form of government. "One of the principal things to be considered," he wrote, "with regard to the good establishment of princes [rulers] is that all *should have some part in the government;* for in this way peace is preserved amongst the people, and all are pleased with such a disposition of things and maintain it. The next thing to be considered is the form of government, of which there are principally two kinds: a Kingdom, in which one rules, and an Aristocracy, in which a few exercise the authority. The best form is that in which one rules over all,

and under him there are others having authority, but the government pertains to all, because those who exercise authority can be chosen from all and are chosen by all. . . . Hence the best government is a mixture of a Kingdom, of Aristocracy and of Democracy, i. e., *of the power of the people,* inasmuch as the rulers can be chosen from the people, and the election of the rulers belongs to the people." There is a vast amount of good republicanism and of sound democracy in these words. First, by the king or monarch St. Thomas means nothing more than some *one* who is to represent the governing authority—who is to be, as we would say, the executive authority. Secondly, the *aristocracy* means those who exercise a salutary restraint on the power of the head of the government; because if there were no restraint the power of the king, says St. Thomas (ad 2um), would easily degenerate into tyranny. Congressmen and senators, for instance, would supply the demand for an aristocracy. Lastly, St. Thomas says that neither a kingdom nor an aristocracy will form a stable government unless the element of democracy is introduced by permitting the choice of the rulers from the people and by the people, that thus all may have some part in the government. These words lead us to believe that if St. Thomas were living to-day he would be a republican or a democrat.

Infallibility of the Pope.—In the Secunda Secundae, question 1, article 10, on Faith, St. Thomas teaches the infallibility of the Pope, "to whose authority it pertains to determine finally the things that are of faith, that they should be held by all with unwavering assent." Hence, he adds, it has been the custom of the Church to refer to the Pope all the grave and difficult questions which arise; and our Lord said to St. Peter whom He appointed supreme Pontiff: "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, and thou being once converted confirm thy brethren" (Luke, xxii, 32). He then gives the following theological reason for his con-

clusion: "There should be one faith in the Church, according to the words of St. Paul (1 Cor., 1, 10): 'That you all speak the same things, and that there be no schisms among you.' This will not be possible unless questions of faith that arise can be determined by the one who presides over the whole Church, so that his determination should be held by the whole Church." Three hundred years before Protestantism was known, and six hundred years before the Vatican Council was celebrated, St. Thomas proclaimed and proved Papal Infallibility.

Infidels Not to Be Forced to Believe.—In the tenth question, seventh article, of the same treatise, St. Thomas teaches that unbelievers cannot be compelled to accept the Christian faith; because to believe is an act of the will and the will cannot be forced. Those who have accepted the faith can be punished if they fail to keep the promises which they made; unbelievers can lawfully be prevented from persecuting Christians, from blaspheming Christianity, or from carrying on a wicked proselytism; hence Christian nations have at times waged war against infidels. But, even when unbelievers have been conquered and captured they must be left free to believe or not to believe.

These things do not surprise us, being so reasonable, so natural and so well known. There are, however, in the world to-day —some of them are in our own country—men, who need the consoling assurance that the greatest of medieval theologians would not approve of a papal invasion for the purpose of compelling outsiders to accept the Roman Catholic faith.

Children of Jews and Infidels.—St. Thomas will not allow the children of Jews or other unbelievers to be baptised without the consent of their parents (2a 2ae, q. x, art. 12; 3 P., q. 68, art. 10). According to the natural law, a child, before he arrives at the use of reason, is under the care of his father (i. e., of his parents); hence it would be against natural justice if a child, before it ac-

quires the use of reason, were withdrawn from the care of its parents, or if anything were done with it against the wish of the parents.

The Incarnation.—In the third part of the Summa, St. Thomas treats of the Incarnation, of the sacraments instituted by Chris and of eternal life. We read in the life of St. Thomas that c three different occasions Christ spoke to His servant, saying "Bene scripsisti de me, Thoma—Thou has written well of M Thomas." This approbation of our Lord should be understood applying in a special manner to the third part of the Summa. It i impossible to find anything more scientific and more sublime than St. Thomas' treatise on the Incarnation. Starting out with th Scriptures in his hand, and with this one truth accepted on faitl Jesus was both God and man, he constructs a most remarkal treatise on the natures and person of Christ, on the acts and su ferings of God incarnate. The tract contains fifty-nine questio with an average of five or six articles to a question. The Old a New Testaments, the councils, the decrees of the Popes, t writings of the Fathers, are all called upon to glorify Jesus Chris the corner-stone on which our faith is built. The treatise is a most extraordinary combination of deep faith and piety, of theological learning and good sense. What we know from good authority St. Thomas affirms with certainty, and no theologian can equal him when there is question of determining the conclusions which can be drawn from the truths made known by faith. On questions that depend on the will of God alone, if that will has not been made known to us, he wisely abstains from useless speculations. In this he differs from writers of less renown who seem to be afraid of saying: There are some things which we do not know and cannot know until God speaks on the subject.

Baptism.—He applies the same rule in his treatise on the sacraments. In his treatise, for instance, on the necessity of Baptism

he first calls attention to the law of salvation laid down by our Savior Himself. "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John, iii, 5). After that, when the question arises: What, then, is to become of children who die without having an opportunity to receive baptism? St. Thomas answers: As far as we know, men can do nothing for them; they are in the hands of God, who is all-powerful and just (3 P., q. 68, art. 11 ad 1m). Men may write for weeks and months; they may fill the pages of reviews and may publish books on this subject, but, since God has not deigned to make any special revelation concerning these children, they can give us no more satisfaction than that which is afforded by St. Thomas' short declaration: Those children are in the hands of God; He will deal with them in justice and mercy.

The Eucharist.—His treatise on the Eucharist is one that could not disappoint those who expect something grand from the author of the Office of the Blessed Sacrament. For St. Thomas the Eucharist, as a sacrament and as a sacrifice, was truly the center of the Christian religion. Towards our Lord under the sacramental species he had a profound devotion and a tender piety; hence he threw his whole soul into his tract on this sacrament of love. The bread of the angels made the Angelic Doctor more angelic; the extraordinary perspicacity of his penetrating mind is nowhere more strikingly manifested than in the articles of this treatise where he develops the conclusions which flow from the dogmas of the Real Presence and of Transubstantiation, or where he answers the objections which had been made or could be made against this important doctrine of the Catholic Church. Christ, in His sacred person and in the Eucharist, was the central object of St. Thomas' life and the center towards which all his theological treatises were directed.

For other specimens of St. Thomas' doctrine the reader is

referred to that golden book, the Catechism of the Council of Trent, which was taken almost bodily from the "Summa Theologica," and was composed by three men who had spent their lives studying the works of the Angelic Doctor. Cardinal Newman was in love with this book, and always spoke of it in terms of the highest praise.

St. Thomas and the Encyclicals of Leo XIII.—We would also recommend most earnestly to those who wish to know St. Thomas, the study of the dogmatic Encyclicals of the late Pope Leo XIII. Knowing the Pope to be an enthusiastic admirer of the Angelic Doctor our readers will not be surprised to learn that his dogmatic Encyclicals are to a great extent nothing more than developments of principles laid down by St. Thomas. This is in a special manner true of the Encyclicals on Scholastic Philosophy, the Christian Constitution of States, the Condition of Workingmen, the Study of the Scriptures, and Devotion to the Holy Ghost. The Holy Father believed firmly that the principles of the Angelic Doctor would bring light and order into the darkness and confusion of the nineteenth century as they did in the thirteenth century. We should feel very happy and fully repaid for the time spent on this volume if we could think that it might be the means of exciting a desire to know and to follow the words of advice addressed to the children of this troubled age, by the wise, learned and saintly Pope Leo XIII.