Spring 1942

Leo XIII And Philosophy

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LEO XIII AND PHILOSOPHY

by

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A Dissertation
Submitted to the Department of Philosophy
of Carroll College in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Bachelor of Arts

Helena, Montana

1942
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The State of Philosophy at the Time of Leo XIII

The eighteenth century "philosopher" was a determined fighter, but a fighter with a malicious, destructive turn of mind. This iconoclast, not merely holding before himself the banner of philosophy but hiding behind its disarming folds, attacked religion whose very spirit, faith, he was determined to destroy in the name of reason. And the rationalist was confident that he held a powerful influence over society. For example, had his doctrines not transcended the speculative and brought about the French Revolution of 1789? Then his plea had been reechoed by a deluded people: "Enlightenment, Progress, Reason." How well did Leo XIII recognize these subtle delusions of rationalist error...

But as men are apt to follow the lead given them, this new pursuit seems to have caught the souls of certain Catholic philosophers, who, throwing aside the patrimony of ancient wisdom, chose rather to build up a new edifice than to strengthen and complete the old by aid of the new—ill advisedly, in sooth, and not without detriment to the sciences.

But it would seem that the rationalist, having expended his energy in a statement of his position, namely, to oppose faith with reason, dissipated himself in contradictions and was content

to be a mere stepping stone of another opponent of faith and true reason.

This new opponent was holding its vigor still at the time of Leo XIII. Now faith was being attacked not in the name of reason, but in the name of science. As materialistic "Thought" increased under the tutelage of the discoveries of "science," Catholic philosophers were viewed by the world as timid, halting idealists, sterile of philosophical combat.

To a certain extent, it is not to be denied, the disintegration of philosophical thought had laid hold of individual Catholic thought. The source of this evil, here and there, was the contagious infection of Descartes' principle of methodical doubt which had led to irrational license in thought, which in turn had resolved itself into a loss of philosophical tradition. This contempt of tradition, marked by the abandonment of the method of the Scholastics was followed by a "narrow spiritualism which by its very exaggeration exposed itself to the attacks of materialism, and by a tendency to wish to adapt the most dangerous systems of the heterodox philosophers to the requirements of faith." Those of the Catholic philosophers who did agree, and these presented no united front, set forth for the most part a vague and seemingly impractical spiritualism. "They had recourse indeed to an incoherent eclecticism which was only the juxtaposition of the dreams of metaphysicians of all the schools." So, lost in inaccessible abstractions,

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(4) Ibid., p. 105.
(5) Ibid., p. 106.
they sought a retreat in the Church, "the citadel of faith," quite oblivious that their method of combat was ruinous to the lawful position of faith and reason.

So too by Catholic philosophers the practical aspects of philosophy had been lost sight of. The science of dialectics had lost its meaning and was set aside; philosophical lectures, dissertations were decidedly non-philosophic. But true to the traditional evidences of the history of Catholicism there were many intellects keenly aware of Catholic sterility in contemporary thought and aware of the insufficiencies of the methods in vogue in the Catholic schools of philosophy. Profiting from a study of periods in contrast in the history of philosophy certain acute intellects did not merely revert to, but seized upon the eternal modernity of the old Scholasticism. These minds had come to realize the power of the Scholastic system with its perfect unity of conception, its strictness of method, and its positive and sane regard for the relation between the soul of man and his body.

At last Scholasticism with the philosophy of its towering giant, St. Thomas Aquinas, as a weapon of utter persuasion, showed promise of coming again into its own. In Italy the peripatetic school of Perugia, with Joseph Pecci as its head, was the most energetic and logical group in this rebirth of Scholasticism. At Bologna a review was founded for the propagation of Thomism. The keeper of the traditions of Thomism, the Dominican School, suddenly began to resuscitate itself and
and emerged with Zigliera from a relative state of obscurity. Kleutgen labored to promulgate Thomism in Germany. In Spain Gonzalez took up the Scholastic tradition again. And though Cartesian thought held dominance in France and Belgium there was a pronounced growth of Thomism in those countries.

Father Torgiorgi and his colleagues and successors at the Roman colleges led another group which was more or less eclectic. This school made concessions to other systems on many points; but its method thus made a wide development in Catholic training.

Leo XIII, an intensely interested witness to the battle between faith and unbelief, resolved to apply a remedy to the erroneous by reviving the study of the Scholastic philosophy and method. And where the buddings of a neo-Scholasticism were to be perceived, Leo XIII desired to give the determining impetus of his authoritative pronouncement. On August 4, 1879 there came from the Holy See the encyclical *Aeterni Patris* — eminent assurance of the victory of the philosophical system of St. Thomas, which was to be restored in all of its former purity. (6)

With the help of an intellectual system which went back to a thinker for more than six centuries in his grave, Leo XIII sought to reconcile the dogmas of faith with modern thought and to remove that deep antagonism that had grown up between the Church and "civilization" — and the reconciliation was traditional Catholic reconciliation, union of truths rather than

compromise of truth with error. The ideas which St. Thomas Aquinas, the great Doctor of the Schools, set forth in his writings not only determined the philosophic attitude towards temporal affairs which Leo opposed to the rationalistic and materialistic creed of the nineteenth century, but they gave analytical expression to the eternal basis for all the pronouncements and acts of a pontificate of vast importance for the modern Church.

The encyclical, Aeterni Patris, treated of the most vital points of intellectual education in human society. It showed the vast importance of this education and its sovereign influence on the social state. The document distinctly summoned the attention of all authorities in the matter to one of the greatest needs of the time, and one of the most neglected, namely, the necessity of a solid training in philosophy, the happy consequences of which would be incalculable to individuals and to society.

Leo XIII pointed out that there existed in the past of Catholicism a philosophical statement of invariable truths unaffected by the changing of time and unchangeable in the face of centuries to come. This philosophical system, the product of a Dominican Friar, would now be reconstituted as the guide of knowledge and world order in modern times because the genius of this friar was full of life, and as a living genius it consisted in adapting and assimilating,

and thus recreating and manifesting itself anew. St. Thomas was more adapted than others to this particular age, he was steeped in it and alive to its wants, but nothing could satisfy him other than the quest of eternity, which is of every age, and that is what makes him the concern of all. (3)

CHAPTER I

A Summary of the Encyclical

Aeterni Patris

Today the minds of people have been perverted by the false principles of a false philosophy and, in so far as minds have been perverted, there necessarily follows the perversion of the wills and actions of men.

Men must take a stand on true and solid principles for the public as well as the private good. But along with a sound philosophy, faith and grace are necessary to overcome error. We must look primarily to the help of God to dispel error and restore right understanding. Faith neither opposes reason nor does it destroy it. Rather, reason perfected by faith and developed by a sound philosophy, becomes an auxiliary of faith. Therefore, we must take advantage of the human science as "that by which the most wholesome faith is begotten, ...is nourished, defended, and made strong."

The first purpose, then, of philosophy is to make straight the path to faith. On its own, philosophy demonstrates many of the basic religious truths: It has arrived at a knowledge of the existence of God and his infinite perfection, and thus shows men the reasonableness of belief in revelation.

(9) De Trin., lib. xiv. c.1. (Quoted in Aeterni Patris.)
It shows that the Church, by her holiness, fruitfulness and propagation is herself a proof of her divine mission. Furthermore reason, of itself, arrives at a concept of the miraculous and supernatural origin, and character of the doctrines of the Gospel; the unbending stability and unity of the Church.

The Fathers of the Church enlisted a scientific use of pagan philosophy, where this philosophy was based on true principles, to show the reasonableness of Christianity — as the Hebrews borrowed gold and silver vessels and vestments from the idolatrous Egyptians to devote these articles to the service of the true God, so the Fathers took philosophical weapons from the pagans for the defence and glory of Christianity.

To philosophy goes the task of giving to sacred theology the nature, form and genius of a true science that the whole of theology and each of its parts may be strengthened by its own, and by reason's invincible arguments. Then by repelling the attacks of non-belief, philosophy may develop the knowledge of the real nature of matters of faith. Because these attacks stem mainly from philosophy, it is to a great extent through philosophy that they must be refuted. But if philosophers are to wage a successful war of rational refutation they must follow the way which the Fathers of the Church point out and which is confirmed by the authority of the Vatican Council. And philosophers must be ever mindful that reason must receive
from faith the mysteries beyond its pale and must not, therefore, interpret these arbitrarily -- philosophy should rest content as the "servant of the heavenly doctrines." The Catholic philosopher must recognize that he violates both the rights of faith and of reason if he adopts a conclusion contrary to revealed doctrine -- a truth cannot oppose a truth.

Some consider the subservience of the intellect to divine authority a species of slavery. These forget that reason, as a created thing, is confined within certain limits, but reason, as the handmaid of divine authority is saved from multitudinous errors and doubts and is enriched with divine truth, not degraded or shackled. Thinking men must, therefore, look on reason as a useful weapon to disprove what is opposed to faith and to prove what conforms to faith. Thereby men may show the viciousness of arguments on which error rests and at the same time make themselves capable demonstrators of truth.

The History of Philosophy reveals the vast extent of error mingled with truth in pagan philosophy and how the Christian philosophers made use of the truths the pagans had expressed in order to present a new apology for Catholic truth. Because the Fathers and Doctors of the Church recognized Christ to be the restorer of human science -- Christ, the power and wisdom of God -- they compared the data of pagan philosophy with the doctrines of revelation and kept what was true and wise in pre-Christian thought.
The Church from the beginning has encountered adversaries who, deriding revelation, have maintained belief in many gods; that the material world has no cause; that no will of a divine Providence directs the course of human events. But under the guidance of faith the Christian apologists found arguments in human wisdom to prove that there is one God, omnipotent and all perfect; that this God created all things from nothing; that by His wisdom each created thing serves its own special purpose.

Among these early apologists there are: St. Justin Martyr who, having made a study of Greek philosophy, concluded that he could draw truths in their fulness only from revelation. These truths he embraced and reconciled with them many teachings of Greek philosophers. Men of like action are Quadratus, Aristides, Hermias, Athenagoras and Irenaeus. The latter explained the origins of each heresy against the Church and its philosophic source. St. Jerome treated of many things useful for the compiling of a history of philosophy, for dialectics and for the coincidentia rationis et fidei. Origen, Tertullian, Arnobius and Lactantius all strove to move pagans to accept Catholic dogmas partly by turning the teachings of the pagans back upon themselves and partly by arguments drawn from the mutual contentions of philosophers. Also of the greatest moment are the writings of Athanasius and Chrysostom on the human soul. Noteworthy in combatting heresy there also appear on the scene Basil the Great and the two Gregories, men who waged successful
battle in defense of the Church after they had thoroughly studied Greek philosophy.

The greatest of the patristic apologists is the genius of profane and sacred learning, St. Augustine. Augustine combatted all the errors of his time, expounded the greatest mysteries of faith and defended them against adversaries such as the academicians and against heretics, notably the Manichaeans, and in so doing he laid foundations and structure for human science. He reasoned on the angels, the soul, the human mind, the will and free choice, on religion and the life of the blessed, on time and eternity, and the very nature of changeable bodies. Afterwards, in the east John Damascene, and in the west Boetius and Anselm following the doctrines of Augustine, added largely to the patrimony of philosophy.

To the scholastic philosophers of the middle ages went the great work of collecting, sifting and preserving the works of the holy Fathers. It was the special office of these scholastics to bind together by the fastest chains human and divine science.

From among the scholastic doctors there emerges one towering intellect, St. Thomas Aquinas, who, as Cajetan observes, because "he most venerated the ancient doctors of the Church, in a certain way seems to have inherited the intellect of all." (10)

(10) In 2m. 2ae. q. 148, a. 4, in fin, (Quoted in Aeterni Patris)
St. Thomas is the great synthesizer of the true doctrines and teachings of the past, as well as a prolific contributor or original thought to philosophy. There is no part of philosophy he did not touch at once and thoroughly — on the laws of reasoning, on God and incorporeal substances, on man and other sensible things, on human actions and their principles. He further pushed his philosophic conclusions into the reasons and principles of the things which are most comprehensive and contain the primary expressions of almost infinite truths to be more fully expounded in due season by later philosophers. Single-handed he combatted old errors and supplied the weapons for routing those to come. St. Thomas carried reason to heights whence it can scarcely rise higher so that faith can scarcely expect stronger aids from reason than those she has received from Thomas.

Since his time it is known that nearly all founders and framers of laws of religious orders commanded study and adherence to the teachings of St. Thomas — The Dominicans, the Benedictines, the Carmelites, the Augustinians, the Jesuits are all bound by this law. Thomas, the Angelic Doctor, reigned supreme in the medieval universities at Paris, Douay, Padua, Bologna, Naples, Coimbra, etc.

Pope Pius V confesses that heresies, confounded and convicted by the teachings of St. Thomas, were dissipated, and
the whole world daily freed from fatal errors through the writings of Thomas. Other pontiffs affirm with Clement XII that most fruitful blessings have spread abroad from his writings over the whole Church, and that he is worthy of the honor which is bestowed on the greatest doctors of the Church like Gregory, Ambrose, Augustine and Jerome. To the Academy of Toulouse Blessed Urban V wrote: "It is our will, which we hereby enjoin upon you, that ye follow the teaching of Blessed Thomas as the true and Catholic doctrine, and that ye labor with all your force to profit by the same." From Innocent VI comes the crowning testimony: "His teaching above that of all others, the canons alone excepted, enjoys such an elegance of phraseology, a method of statement, a truth of proposition, that those who hold to it are never found swerving from the path of truth, and he who dare assail it will always be suspected of error." 

Much has been the praise of St. Thomas by the ecumenical councils especially that of Trent where the Fathers desired to have his *Summa Theologica* placed on the altar with the Sacred Scriptures and the decrees of the Popes. Whence it is that many heretics openly declared that, if the teaching of Thomas Aquinas were only taken away, they could easily battle with all Catholic

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(11) Const. 5a. dat. die 3 Aug. 1368 ad Cancell. Univ. Tolos. (Quoted in *Aeterni Patris*.)
(12) Serm. de St. Thom. (Quoted in *Aeterni Patris*.)
teachers and abolish the Church -- a vain hope, but no vain testimony.

Because daily experience and the judgment of the greatest men and the voice of the Church have favored the scholastic philosophy, this system of thought should reign everywhere. Innovators of the sixteenth century sought to philosophize without respect for faith and novel systems of philosophy multiplied beyond measure, and conclusions differing one with another arose in matters of human knowledge. This licentious pursuit of knowledge seems to have caught the souls of certain Catholic philosophers, who with detriment to the sciences seek to throw out ancient wisdom and chose to build a new edifice rather than to strengthen and complete the old by aid of the new. They, however, are not to be censured who place their learning at the service of philosophy and seek to develop philosophical thought by means of new discoveries.

It is important that the renowned teachings of Thomas Aquinas should be returned to their former place of importance because now that the Christian faith is being constantly assailed by the machinations of a certain false wisdom, it is imperative that the young people of the Church should be indoctrinated to advance the cause of religion by repudiating falsehood and convincing gainsayers. Apart from the Catholic faith the best cure for minds warped by rationalism is found in the teachings of the Fathers and the Scholastics who demonstrate
the firm foundations of faith, its divine origin, its certain truth, the arguments that sustain it, the benefits it has conferred on the human race, and its perfect accord with reason, in a manner to satisfy completely minds open to persuasion.

Domestic and civil society would enjoy a far more peaceful and secure existence if scholastic doctrines were taught in academies and schools. To overturn the dangerous principles of this present order there must be a return to Thomas' teaching of the true meaning of liberty, on the divine origin of all authority, on laws and their force, on the paternal and just rule of princes, on obedience to the higher powers, on mutual charity to one another. In fine, all studies ought to find hope of advancement and promise of assistance in this restoration of philosophic discipline. Never before or since have the liberal arts flourished as when Christian philosophy reigned supreme. Even the physical sciences will find great assistance in the reestablishment of the ancient philosophy. For the investigation of facts and contemplation of nature is not enough for the advance of science. But once facts have been established it is necessary to study the nature of corporeal things, to inquire into the laws which govern them and the principles from which their order and varied unity and mutual attraction in diversity arise.

Christian philosophy is, then, not opposed to the advance and development of natural science. The Scholastics always held
that the human intelligence is only led to the knowledge of things without body and matter by means of things sensible— they well understood that nothing was of greater use to the philosopher than to search the mysteries of nature and study physical things. Thomas Aquinas, Albertus Magnus, and others gave large attention to the knowledge of natural things. Today many teachers testify that there are no conflicts worthy of the name between the accepted conclusions of modern physics and the philosophic principles of the schools.

Therefore, restore the golden wisdom of St. Thomas and spread it over the whole world for the defense and beauty of the Catholic faith, for the good of society, and for the advantage of all sciences. Let carefully selected teachers endeavour to implant the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas in the minds of students; let academies take up and defend his doctrines. But they must watch that the sources of knowledge are true and errors are not interspersed with the truths of scholasticism. For the accomplishment of this work we must, however, rely on divine assistance: "If any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men abundantly, and upbraideth not: and it shall be given him." (13)

(13) James i. 17. (quoted in Aeterni Patris.)
CHAPTER II

Philosophical Analysis of the Encyclical

Aeterni Patris

The first pages of the Aeterni Patris are an argumentative plea for a sound, true and complete philosophy of life which would be the requisite foundation for the complete edifice of Christian wisdom and Christian life. Leo XIII recognizes that the false principles of false philosophies have perverted the minds of men and consequently the moral standards of society as a whole. The strength of society lies in a philosophy of life universally applicable and universally applied -- Leo XIII recognized Christian philosophy as the true discipline of life which society demands for the sake of preserving its integrity. Speaking of this demand, Chesterton has said: "It is a fundamental point of view, a philosophy or religion which is needed, and not any change in habit or social routine. The things we need most for immediate practical purposes are all abstractions. We need a right view of the human lot, a right view of the human society."

The Leonine age was one suffering from the deceptions of rationalism and materialism. Necessary, then, for the times was a philosophical system which would, first of all, advance a remedy for the effects of Cartesian dualism: this isolation

of thought and extension had not only destroyed the unity of
men, but had also multiplied the insolvable problems which are
the well-springs of materialism, mechanism, idealism, and sub-
jectivism; the isolation of science and ethics had sown the
seeds of disorder and anarchy; the divorce of the positive
sciences from metaphysics had deprived the positive sciences
of the logical control and sound basis of which they stand in
need at every step, and this separation had degraded metaphysics
to a vague discipline with no concern for the most general as-
psects of reality. Necessary, too, was a philosophical system
which would combat the reaction to this rationalistic pseudo-
metaphysics, namely, the idolatry of the positive sciences and
of the scientific method — modern scientism.

The rationalists and materialists sought to resolve the
problems of living in terms of this world. Not only did they
not have the true philosophy of life but they could never have
possessed the true philosophy without a cognizance of faith
and grace.

In quest of the reason for the bitter strifes of his own
epoch and for the troubles disturbing public and private social
life, Pope Leo XIII has arrived at the conviction "...that
false conclusions concerning divine and human things, which
originated in the schools of philosophy, have crept into all
the orders of the State, and have been accepted by the common
consent of the masses."

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(15) Cf., Rudolph G. Bandas, Contemporary Philosophy and
Thomistic Principles, Bruce publishing Co., New York,
Milwaukee, Chicago, 1932, p. 29.
(16) Aeterni Patris, p. 35.
More specifically the Pontiff traces these errors to a radical separation of the rational thought from the data of faith:

For it pleased the struggling innovators of the sixteenth century to philosophize without any respect for the faith, the power of inventing in accordance with his own pleasure and bent being asked and given in turn by each one. Hence it was natural that systems of philosophy multiplied beyond measure, and conclusions differing and clashing one with another arose about those matters even which are most important in human knowledge. (17)

A true philosophy of life must be a Christian philosophy of life. A Christian philosophy must above all be an exaltation of the power of God, the Creator of the universe. It must recognize that God is Being and Efficiency, in this sense, that all that is, exists by Him alone and all that is made, is made by Him alone. And it is for us to note that the persistent vitality of Christian philosophy has its basis, not in the mere ratiocinations of men, but in the great revealed truths given to man by God. The description of a Christian philosopher might well be: A man who seeks the truth by the unaided effort of reason and is disappointed; it is offered him by faith and he accepts, and having accepted, he finds that it satisfies his reason. (18)

Leo XIII marks, then, the first purpose of philosophy: to make straight the path to faith. He affirms that faith neither opposes reason, nor does it destroy it. Rather, reason

(17) Aeterni Patris, p. 52.
perfected by faith and developed by a sound philosophy becomes an auxiliary of faith. On its own, reason has arrived at a knowledge of God and His infinite perfection, and thus shows men the reasonableness of belief in revelation. Reason, an endowment from God, gives man knowledge of God as Creator; to this God has added His revelation that man may know more of Him. Both ways of knowledge proceed from and end in God, and no real contradiction can lie between them.

Philosophy is, furthermore, the gateway through which the mind can gain admittance to scientific theology. The reason is obvious. Theology, as a science, owes its existence to philosophy. Its very definition teaches this: "rerum divinarum scientia per discursum seu ratione cinationem acquisita." Theology is, indeed, built on revelation. But a belief in revelation rests on the existence and veracity of God, which it is the business of philosophy to investigate. Formal theology is revealed truth, but developed — treated, as the chemist would say — by philosophical thought.

As revealed truths come to us from God they may, indeed, be fragmentary and although not connected after the manner of a logical schema, they are vitally connected because they are further manifestations of the living God or more explicit rules

for man who must live to God. Revelation has not been given merely to the scientific philosopher. The teachings of revelation are often vague, yet, of course, pregnant with meaning that must be realized by reasoning. To theology, therefore, goes the task of elucidating, of classifying and connecting the scattered doctrines of revelation and thus converting variety into unity. And to philosophy, the *ancilla theologiae*, goes the task of giving to sacred theology the nature, form and genius of a true science. Only the philosopher, the mind trained in philosophic method, exercised in subtle thought, and fashioned by the discipline of sound reasoning, can successfully refine and synthesize the bulk of revealed truths.

The *Aeterni Patris* seeks to accent the relation of philosophy and theology not only by noting the contributions of philosophy to theology, but also the valuable aid philosophy receives from theology. Maritain notes that philosophy receives aid from theology in the following ways: 1. In so far as it is of its nature subject to the external control and negative ruling of theology, philosophy is protected from a host of errors; and if its freedom to err is hereby restricted, its freedom to truth is proportionately safeguarded. 2. In so far as philosophy is the instrument of theology, it is led to define more precisely important concepts and theories which, left to itself, it would be in danger of neglecting.

To assign to reason its proper place, and at the same time, firmly to recognize its limitations, is a task reserved for reason alone, for philosophy. Christian philosophy, we note, reached its maturity when the Scholastic philosophy of the middle ages, in the face of theological science, retained the consciousness of self. The medieval philosopher, therefore, not the theologian, has concerned himself with the problem of the limitations of thought.

God helps man to understand that which He himself directly proposes, not only by means of the object, or by the increase of light; but the natural light that makes of man an intelligent being comes also from God; and furthermore, God being the Primary Truth from Whom all other truths derive their certitude -- even as in the demonstrative sciences, secondary propositions derive their certitude from the primary ones -- nothing could be certain in the intellect, save by Divine Power, just as in the sciences no conclusions are certain except by virtue of first principles. (22)

The Christian thinkers, then, have ever kept in mind that the truths of reason, though coming home to them in another manner and upon different grounds, cannot in any sense contradict those of revelation; for they have recognized that both revealed truth and natural truths are of God. They have looked on the Church as the visible medium through which the world of grace and the world of nature merged and met. Accordingly the early schoolmen have not drawn clear lines of demarcation

(23) Thomas Aquinas, "Compend. Theol. ad Fr. Reginaldum," cap. cxxix., Opp., tom. xvi., p. 34. (Quoted in Brother Azarias, Essays Philosophical, p. 31.)
INTRODUCTION

The State of Philosophy at the Time of Leo XIII

The eighteenth century "philosopher" was a determined fighter, but a fighter with a malicious, destructive turn of mind. This iconoclast, not merely holding before himself the banner of philosophy but hiding behind its disarming folds, attacked religion whose very spirit, faith, he was determined to destroy in the name of reason. And the rationalist was confident that he held a powerful influence over society. For example, had his doctrines not transcended the speculative and brought about the French Revolution of 1789? Then his plea had been re-echoed by a deluded people: "Enlightenment, Progress, Reason." (1) How well did Leo XIII recognize these subtle delusions of rationalist error...

But as men are apt to follow the lead given them, this new pursuit seems to have caught the souls of certain Catholic philosophers, who, throwing aside the patrimony of ancient wisdom, chose rather to build up a new edifice than to strengthen and complete the old by aid of the new -- ill advisedly, in sooth, and not without detriment to the sciences. (2)

But it would seem that the rationalist, having expended his energy in a statement of his position, namely, to oppose faith with reason, dissipated himself in contradictions and was content

between matters of faith and matters of reason. As clerics and monks, they studied philosophy, rarely for its own sake, frequently with a view to developing, explaining, or defending the Christian truths, and always in a spirit of docility to the Church.

Contrary to the cry of the rationalists, thought has true freedom only when thought is placed under the protection of revelation. With Christian philosophers we say that thought is necessarily free. But it does not follow that thought does not have its limitations. It has numerous restrictions and it has these because without restriction there can be no continuous train of thought and, therefore, no reasoning.

The restrictions of faith upon thought have never stood in the way of scientific truth rightly demonstrated. On the contrary, he who is possessed of the truths of revealed religion has always the necessary norm with which to compare and adjust any other truths coming within the domain of those that are of revelation. Experience has taught the thinker how likely he is to go astray in pursuing a line of argument. How frequently some misplaced or only partially understood term has stolen into his premisses and warped the whole of his reasoning. Experience proves that the halting philosopher, when in doubt, can and must look to the additional and necessary light of a theological doctrine for verification.

Furthermore, the rationalists in decrying the restrictions of faith on reason should note the other conditions, which they are prone to overlook, by which thought is restricted. There are, first of all, the essential limitations of reason, within which reason follows out certain laws and acts under certain conditions. The mind must accept the primary principle of all demonstration. "It is evident," says Aristotle, "that it is impossible for the same inquirer to suppose that at the same time the same thing should be and should not be." (25) Likewise whenever the intellect perceives an error which it has made, however slow it may be to express that it was wrong, it rebounds at once to its normal condition and thinks the eternal truth, whatever it may be.

Thought has also its restrictions from without. There is the restraint of mental discipline, in which the will compels the intellect to exclude all matters extraneous to that upon which it is then and there occupied, and to move in a given direction. Without this restraint real thinking is impossible and without it there is no means of prolonging a train of thought to its legitimate conclusion, or properly to exhaust the consideration of a proposition. (26) There is, besides, the

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(25) Metaphysics, III., iii. 9. (Quoted in Brother Azarias, op. cit., p. 85.)
restriction of language on thought — the genius of every language materially affects the respective thoughts of every intellect. And there is the restriction of the schools. Each school has its own terminology and each disciple of his respective school thinks in the terms of this school. This can be a hardship on the human mind and a misfortune if but one aspect of a more embracing truth is grasped to the exclusion of other aspects — perhaps more important, in the great pattern of wisdom. Yes, merely human schools may restrict thought; some have paralyzed it. But how short-sighted to confuse guidance with restriction. What a misfortune, even from the purely rational point of view, to miss an important element of truth! What a tragedy to miss the supernatural counterpart of the slightest natural item! Christian philosophy forestalls such misfortunes and averts such tragedies. Christian philosophy is the universal school of living truth.

For a summary of the reconciliation of faith and reason let us hold to the words of Leo:

A wise man, therefore, would not accuse faith and look upon it as opposed to reason and natural truths, but would rather offer heartfelt thanks to God, and sincerely rejoice that, in the density of ignorance and in the flood-tide of error, holy faith, like a friendly star, shines down upon his path and points out to him the fair gate of truth beyond all danger of wandering. (27)

Students in the history of human thought have regarded, in the light of the Christian idea of Providence, the philosophy

(27) Aeterni Patris, p. 43.
of Greece and Rome as a praeparatio evangelica — as a preparation for the Gospel of Christ. Leo XIII points out the abundant use made by the early Fathers of philosophical principles and methods to demonstrate, develop, and defend the teachings of the Christian Faith. Wherever possible the greatest lights of the early Church appeal to philosophic proof and, individually, they evidence great familiarity with the speculations of the pre-Christian philosophers.

Long before St. Thomas Aquinas had brought forth his distinction between philosophy and Christianity, the problem of this distinction had arisen. For example, in the first century when the pagan philosopher, Justin, was converted to Christianity he did not renounce the philosophic habit. Justin firmly held that his philosophy would be helped rather than hindered by his Christian Faith. Leo XIII says: "...he saw clearly that he could only draw truths in their fullness from the doctrines of revelation." The doctrine of Jesus Christ was for him the true philosophy of life, for though there were certain points of doctrine common to Christians and pagans, such as the doctrine of the existence of God, the doctrine of Christ was the more stable and unchanging because it had a guarantee that was divine. St. Clement of Alexandria was a great enthusiast for philosophy as a kind of indirect revelation made by God to the Gentiles, coming as it did from

(23) Aeterni Patris, p. 44.
human reason which, as he said, was a torch lit by God.

Origen was less the liberal, and he remarked of Porphry that he lived as a Christian and thought as a Greek. But aside from the anathemas of Tertullian, from Justin to Augustine the commerce of Christian thought and Greek philosophy was looked upon as a source of benefit to both.

It is the fact that the Fathers were constantly engaged in elaborating a philosophic system in accordance with revealed truths. For this they had to have recourse to reason. Perhaps they were not always successful in delineating both domains, but the inspiration of their philosophic efforts was unmistakable. It was the association, not the separation of philosophy and the faith, which was a main tradition from Justin and the time of the Fathers to the Scholastics and the scholastic, St. Thomas Aquinas.

...Clearly distinguishing, as is fitting, reason from faith, while happily associating the one with the other, he both preserved the rights and had regard for the dignity of each; so much so, indeed, that reason, borne on the wings of Thomas to its human height, can scarcely rise higher, while faith could scarcely expect more or stronger aids from reason than those which she has already attained through Thomas. (30)

We have already made mention of the Scholastic philosophers, but now with Leo XIII let us look to the special mission of the Scholastics: "Later on the doctors of the

(29) Cf., Father James, Christian Philosophy, Burns Oates and Washbourne Ltd., 1939, p. 49.
(30) Aeterni Patris, p. 49.
middle ages, who are called Scholastics, addressed themselves to a great work — that of diligently collecting, and sifting, and storing up, as it were, in one place, for the use and convenience of posterity the rich and fertile harvests of Christian learning scattered abroad in the voluminous works of the holy Fathers." The Pontiff lauds the Scholastic philosophers not only for their great syntheses but for the new philosophic safeguards given by them for the enrichment and strengthening of the Church.

The sources from which Scholastic philosophy had its origins are three: The primary, or rather, the fundamental source is the holy Fathers, especially St. Augustine. It is from the Fathers they receive direction in basic philosophic questions. The second source is Aristotle from whom Logic, the fundamental concepts and truths of Ontology, Psychology, Cosmology and Ethics are drawn. Lastly there is the Platonic and Neo-Platonic source of Scholasticism. From Platonism, indirectly through St. Augustine and Dionysius, doctrines concerning the existence of ideas and of eternal truths in the divine mind, concerning the eternal law, and concerning the innate desire for truth and happiness are drawn.

(31) Aeterni Patris, p. 46.
Concerning Scholastic philosophy Sixtus V has written:

And, indeed, the knowledge and use of so salutary a science, which flows from the fertilizing founts of the sacred writings, the Sovereign Pontiffs, the holy Fathers and the councils, must always be of the greatest assistance to the Church, whether with the view of really and soundly understanding and interpreting the Scriptures, or more safely and to better purpose reading and explaining the Fathers, or for exposing and refuting the various errors and heresies; and in these late days, when those dangerous times described by the apostle are already upon us, when the blasphemers, the proud, and the seducers go from bad to worse, erring themselves and causing others to err, there is surely a very great need of confirming the dogmas of Catholic faith and confuting heresies. (33)

The two illustrious teachers of the Scholastic system were not only contemporaries living in the golden age of Scholasticism, the thirteenth century, but they were friends. The first of these is St. Bonaventure a member and one time head of the Franciscan order. St. Bonaventure set out to lead wandering men back to God. Living in the midst of an intense revival of speculative philosophy, he, the Seraphic Doctor, never lost his sense of values; he was a priest first and philosopher a far second. Philosophy was a means not an end, its value not to be measured by any intrinsic worth, for it had none, but rather by the aid it could give to the understanding of faith and by the progress it afforded the soul in its ascent to ecstatic union with God. St. Bonaventure's whole philosophical thought may be summed up in the titles of

(33) Bulla Triumphantis, an. 1588. (Quoted in Aeterni Patris, p. 47.)
two of his works: "On the Reduction of the Arts to Theology," (34) and "The Soul's Itinerary to God."

But it is to the contemporary of St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas Aquinas, that Leo XIII cedes first place among the Scholastic philosophers. He says:

Among the scholastic doctors, the chief and master of all, towers Thomas Aquinas, who, as Cajetan observes, because 'he most venerated the ancient doctors of the Church, in a certain way seems to have inherited the intellect of all.' The doctrines of those illustrious men, like the scattered members of a body, Thomas collected together and cemented, distributed in wonderful order, and so increased with important additions that he is rightly and deservedly esteemed the special bulwark and glory of the Catholic faith. (35)

There is a stupendous vision underlying the whole of St. Thomas' philosophy -- the vision of an order regulating the entire universe, from which nothing is excluded, in which there is a place for the Creator and for everything created. In accordance with a plan given by God from the first of creation this order is organized in hierarchical spheres, each one of which ranks above or below the other. To St. Thomas reason appeared as a necessary function in the vast plan of creation, and it, too, if rightly exercised, could contribute to the fulfillment of the divine will. The pagan philosophy of Aristotle which had before been considered by many to be the greatest enemy of the Church, and the destroyer of faith, now

(35) Aeterni Patris, p. 48.
became in the hands of St. Thomas Aquinas a method to be used to confirm the dogmas of faith and to defend each from attack. St. Thomas brought forth all that was good in Aristotle — his logic, with its chain of deduction, with all of its power to prove and convince. Had not Aristotle himself said that by reflecting on the causes of the visible world, reason could arrive at the science of divine things.

St. Thomas admits the need of proving the existence of God and realizes the mind's capability in doing the same. Yet he rightly limits this philosophic knowledge of God to that manifestation of the divine nature seen by the mind in created effects. Many truths such as, the Trinity, the Incarnation of the Son of God, etc., the unaided human mind cannot grasp because of their own perfection. And even those things which are naturally known about God cannot give us an adequate concept of Him. Yet, just as for Aristotle metaphysics is really theology, although we grant that his concept of God is erroneous and meager, so too for St. Thomas the true object of metaphysics is God. Indeed he tells us in the *Summa* "...In sacred science all things are treated of under the aspect of God; either because they are God Himself; or because they refer to God as their beginning and end." Thus is philosophy a quest for God.

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(36) *Summa Theologica*, I, q.1, a, 7, c.

(37) Fulop-Miller, *Leo XIII and Our Times*, p. 66.

(38) *Contra Gentiles*, I, I.
Thus is Thomism theocentric, but it is no self-sufficient nor
impotent rationalism which would assume the prerogative of
comprehending God, nor fall, on the other hand, into the abyss
of agnosticism. Thomism is "True Rationalism", and philosophy
maintains its noblest function in the highest reaches of thought
as the ancilla theologiae. And it is theology which will give
the rich fullness of the living God through revelation and grace.
No wonder, then, that St. Thomas was the opponent of the
rationalism of his age, whether that rationalism came from spur­
rious Aristotellean texts or from the more radical types of neo­
Platonism or from the vagrant philosophies of his day, such as
the Logicism of Abelard.

St. Thomas does not refer to himself as a philosopher.
He is Doctor Catholicus or Theologus, concerned with Saera Doc­
trina. His monumental work, wherein lies his philosophy, is
the *Summa Theologiae*, not *Philosophica*. His teaching, taken
in its entirety, is not a philosophy, it is a theology which,
however, uses philosophy as a handmaid.

Theology avoids the critical point of view and
its accompanying analytical method...Its content
embraces the whole object of knowledge, but views
it from the particular angle of divine revelation,...
and at once finds a proper place for human nature in
so far as it can know, since it is properly classified
in the order of being.... If the order of beings is
known by divine faith, then our condition as thinking
beings, our capacity and our limitations will be like­
wise known.(39)

St. Thomas, having first classified things according to
truth by the light of revelation, was prepared, then, to

(39) Sertillanges, O. F., Foundations of Thomistic Philosophy,
p. 30.
classify them according to being. He correlated human knowledge with the divine and having done this was equipped to pursue and advance, as he did, human science to an astounding perfection. In the words of Leo XIII: "...he victoriously combated the errors of former times, and supplied invincible arms to put those to rout which might in after-times spring up." Leo XIII recognized that rationalistic error, ever old and ever new, which now was the root source of modern evils, might well be dispelled by the principles of Thomism -- the living incorporation of divine truth and true reason.

...[He] dealt with errors similar to many which go under the name of philosophy or science in our days. The Rationalism of Abelard and others called forth St. Thomas's luminous and everlasting principles on the true relations of faith and reason. Ontologism was solidly refuted by St. Thomas nearly six centuries before the days of Malebranche, Gioberti, and Ubaghs...The true doctrine on first principles and on universals, given by him and by the other great Scholastics, is the best refutation of Kant's criticism of metaphysical ideas...Modern psychological Pantheism does not differ substantially from the theory of one soul for all men asserted by Averroes...The Modernistic error, which distinguishes the Christ of faith from the Christ of history, had as its forerunner the...principle that a thing might be true in philosophy and false in religion.(41)

The basic principles and organic doctrines of Thomism are true. There are conclusive external signs which prove the truth of Thomistic philosophy: Firstly, this philosophy

(40) Aeterni Patris, p. 49.
of St. Thomas is the natural philosophy of the human mind; it develops and perfects what is most deeply and genuinely natural in our intellect, both in its fundamental apprehensions and in its inherent tendency towards truth. Furthermore, Thomistic philosophy is the evidential philosophy, based on the data perceived by our senses and our intellectual grasp of first principles -- the philosophy of being, entirely supported by and modeled upon what is, and respecting every demand of reality -- the philosophy of the intellect, which it trusts as the faculty capable of attaining truth. It is for these reasons that Thomism proves itself an expression of the universal philosophy. It does not reflect a nationality, a class, a group, or a race. It is, rather, the expression of reason which is always and in every place the same. And in its position as that expression of universal philosophy Thomism leads the finest minds to the most sublime and seemingly unattainable knowledge without betraying those fundamental convictions instinctively acquired by every sane mind -- in brief, common sense. Thomism, therefore, rightfully claims to be the abiding and permanent philosophy, the philosophia perennis, since before St. Thomas had given it scientific formulation as a systematized philosophy, it existed from the beginning of humanity in the pre-philosophic state, as a natural knowledge of the first principles of reasons. Finally, Thomism stands out as being one -- as a
unified philosophy. It is one because it alone bestows harmony and unity on human knowledge, and one because in itself, it realizes the greatest possible consistency out of the greatest possible complexity. Neglect of the least of its principles involves the most unexpected consequences, distorting a true understanding of reality in innumerable directions. (42)

Historical and systematic investigations have proven Thomism to be the most comprehensive and consistent embodiment of the best philosophic thought of the most renowned thinkers. And the philosophic discoveries of the greatest minds have been critically appraised, developed, and rounded out by the genius of St. Thomas. This fact necessitates the acceptance of one of the following three alternatives:

Either we hold that the ages-long speculations of the supreme intellects of the race attained to no abiding truths — and we have absolute skepticism; or we contend that the "truths" reached were valid only for the respective times, places, and cultures — and we profess the "philosophy" of perpetual flux, or radical relativism; or we admit that these earnest efforts of humanity's intellectual elite did result in the conquest of a rich fund of perennial philosophic doctrines which have been appropriated and assimilated by Thomism as the accumulated wisdom of the race; the intellectual heritage of the ages. (43)

Thomism, in its basic principles and in its doctrines, is perennially true, and because it is true it has the universality and indefectibility of truth itself. It transcends the limits of time and space. Like truth, Thomistic philosophy is ever

(42) Cf., Maritain, An Introduction to Philosophy, pp. 99-101
(43) Rudolph G. Bandes: Contemporary Philosophy and Thomistic Principles, p. 16. (Taken from the Introduction by John S. Zulueta.)
modern and actual. It is the truth of past centuries — truth discovered by Plato and Aristotle, St. Augustine and St. Thomas — which is still true. Because the human mind is indetically constituted in all men the same laws, principles, and demonstrations of the past still hold today in as much as they have been proven true. Truth is the rightful possession of every mind and is no more to be rejected because it is old than error is to be retained because it may be new! Thomism is the true philosophic heritage in which every intellect has the right and duty to share.

Upholding Scholasticism, with its renowned exponent, St. Thomas, Leo XIII says:

...We think it hazardous that its special honor should not always and everywhere remain, especially when it is established that daily experience, and the judgment of the greatest men, and, to crown all, the voice of the Church, have favored scholastic philosophy. (44)

...We think that, apart from the supernatural help of God, nothing is better calculated to heal those minds[ the Rationalists] and to bring them into favor with the Catholic faith than the solid doctrines of the Fathers and the scholastics, who so clearly and forcibly demonstrate the firm foundations of the faith, its divine origin, its certain truth, the arguments that sustain it, the benefits it has conferred on the human race, and its perfect accord with reason, in a manner to satisfy completely minds open to persuasion, however unwilling and repugnant. (45)

A prime necessity for the enlightening of rationalistic minds, and also of the minds of material scientists is a true concept of the meaning of liberty and the source of all authority. We are creatures of God and we must recognize all

(44) Aeterni Patris, p. 52.
(45) Ibid., p. 54.
authority as flowing through Him to creature agents -- which creature authority is to be upheld and respected as representative of the omnipotence of the Creator. The rationalist and materialist, furthermore, make man the master and measure of things, and assert his independence of God and divine law. Against this absurdity Scholastic philosophy must wage continuous war. The Scholastic insists that the only liberty worthy of a man is the liberty to do the things he ought to do, not the liberty to do the things he naturally likes to do.

Scholasticism is a stable and trustworthy guardian against error, and holds that a man is free only in so far as he possesses truth and is not shackled by ignorance or error. Scholastic philosophy, in its stability and breadth, is such that it serves as an excellent basis and principle for the ultimate interpretation of the data of all the sciences.

Leo XIII insists that the Scholasticism of St. Thomas Aquinas is not antiquated. Of course, like other systems of thought of all ages it must be studied historically. All great philosophies, to a greater or lesser extent, contain substantially that which triumphs over time. And Thomism specifically and more completely is a synthesis which transcends all its components. Thomism is relevant to every era. It will answer

modern problems both theoretical and practical. In the face of present day perplexities, it displays a power to fashion and set free the mind because of its firm yet liberating authoritative direction. We look, therefore, to Thomism to save, in the speculative order, intellectual values; in the practical order, in so far as they can be saved by philosophy, human values.

"...All studies ought to find hope of advancement and promise of assistance in this restoration of philosophic discipline..." Because Leo XIII urges that philosophy act as a governing discipline for the other sciences, we must make clear the relationship between philosophy and the other sciences. Every science has its own sphere of activity where it reigns, inasmuch as every science possesses within its sphere the necessary and sufficient means of attaining truth. No one has the right to deny the truths of a science thus proved. However, a science is liable to err in its own domain, and, when this happens, that science may be able to judge and correct itself. Otherwise, a superior science has the right and duty to judge and correct the erring one, if the mistake should contradict one of the superior science's own findings. Philosophy, and above all the first philosophy, Metaphysics, is the sovereign human science. Therefore, it is competent to judge every other

(48) Aeterni Patris, p. 55.
human science, rejecting as false every scientific hypothesis contradicting its own results. And since the laws of one science are dependent on the laws of a superior science, the office of the superior science is clearly the task of governing the inferior. Let us note the words of Leo:

When philosophy stood stainless in honor and wise in judgment, then, as facts and constant experience showed, the liberal arts flourished as never before or since... The arts were wont to draw from philosophy, as from a wise mistress, sound judgment and right method, and from it also their spirit as from the common fount of life... Nor will the physical sciences, which are now in such great repute, and by the renown of so many inventions draw such universal admiration to themselves, suffer detriment but find very great assistance in the reestablishment of the ancient philosophy. For the investigation of facts and the contemplation of nature is not alone sufficient for their profitable exercise and advance; but when facts have been established it is necessary to rise and apply ourselves to the study of the nature of corporeal things, to inquire into the laws which govern them and the principles whence their order and varied unity and mutual attraction in diversity arise.

Truly the investigation of facts and the contemplation of nature is not enough for the advance of the physical sciences. The basic principles of the physical sciences must be sought. Scholastic philosophers offer the principles of Metaphysics, the first philosophy, as the necessary foundation upon which the principles of all the other sciences must be laid. The principles of Metaphysics, the principles of being as such, are, therefore, applicable to the various manifestations of being.

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(49) Cf., Maritan, An Introduction to Philosophy, p. 111.
(50) Aeterni Patris, p. 55. (The present writer has taken the liberty to rearrange the sentence order.)
These principles of Metaphysics must necessarily underlie the principles of all the sciences because all things bathe in being, from the lowest order of being up to the very highest, God — all are understandable in terms of being. "All the other sciences as the sciences of partial realities are subordinate to Metaphysics, the science of the whole reality. Metaphysics defends the principles upon which the various sciences are based, because all other principles are founded upon the first principles which are the immediately and per se intuitively known principles of metaphysics."

And here it is well to note that our philosophy can only by the grossest injustice be accused of being opposed to the advance and development of natural science. For when the scholastics, following the opinion of the holy Fathers, always held in anthropology that the human intelligence is only led to the knowledge of things without body and matter by things sensible, they well understood that nothing was of greater use to the philosopher than diligently to search into the mysteries of nature and to be earnest and constant in the study of physical things.

To obtain the necessary materials with which to work, philosophy uses, as instruments, truths provided by the evidence of the senses and the conclusions proved by the sciences. This dependence of philosophy is a purely material dependence, since the superior depends on the inferior to be served by the inferior not to do him service. Philosophy, then, judges by

(52) Aeterni Patris, p. 35.
its own light whatever the subservient sciences bring to supply its need of material. The Scholastics, holding this tenet, have never opposed true natural science. Rather such men as St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Albert the Great have diligently observed natural phenomena as a source of philosophic advancement. St. Albert, a renowned Aristotelian and teacher of St. Thomas, was the greatest biologist of the thirteenth century, the golden age of medieval culture. Where the positive sciences end with the determination and discovery of facts and the building up of knowledge, the Scholastic philosopher enters upon the scene to concern himself with the formation and refinement of opinion. He seeks to clear away ill-based prejudices which spring up to distort the viewpoint of scientists. He examines the presuppositions and postulates of every department of science, revises its procedures, and harmonizes its conclusions with those of other branches.

Just as St. Thomas, in his day, saw a movement towards Aristotle and philosophical studies which could not be checked, but could be guided in the right direction and made to serve the cause of truth, so also, Leo XIII, seeing in the world of his time a spirit of study and investigation which might be productive of evil or of good, had no desire to check it, but resolved to propose a moderator and master who could guide it in the paths of truth. (54)

CHAPTER III

Disciplinary Content of the Encyclical Aeterni Patris
And Its Effects on the Teaching of Philosophy

"We exhort you, Venerable Brethren, in all earnestness to restore the golden wisdom of St. Thomas, and to spread it far and wide for the defence and beauty of the Catholic faith, for the good of society, and for the advantage of all the sciences."

For this end has the encyclical Aeterni Patris been written: to approve and make known to all the wealth of truth discoverable in the Scholastic system of philosophy; to triumphantly lead forth St. Thomas Aquinas from the confines of the thirteenth century and actualize him as the thinker who understands and has solutions to offer for the evils of the modern world. The modern world, in its desire to be a progressive world, has distorted changeless truths to make them "progressive," gullibly swallowed wholesale speculations, and has thus retarded all true rational and scientific progress.

If a progressive universe is a contemporary ideal, then the philosophy of St. Thomas is its greatest realization. Modern Idealism needs the complement of his realism; empiricism needs his transcendental principles; philosophical biology his metaphysics; sociological morality his ethics;

(55) Aeterni Patris, p. 56.
sentimentalism his theory of the intelligence; and the world needs the God he knew and loved and adored.\(^{(56)}\)

Leo XIII stresses the restoration of Thomistic philosophy; yet he is not slighting the position of other Scholastic philosophers who have labored to discover eternal truths for the advancement of human reason. In urging the world to accept Scholasticism, Leo expects men to enlist in the ranks of those active and fruitful apostles of truth, to share in their wisdom and zeal, to be the living prelocutors of the timeless verities. And he gives men a leader and model philosopher who has synthesized perennial truths with greatest cohesion and consistency.

Leo XIII quotes the testimony of Innocent VI: "His teaching above that of the others, the canons alone excepted, enjoys such an elegance of phraseology, a method of statement, a truth of proposition, that those who hold to it are never found swerving from the path of truth, and he who dare assail it will always be suspected of error." \(^{(57)}\) Let us now quote the Pontiff's own words:

And here how pleasantly one's thoughts fly back to those celebrated schools and academies which flourished of old in Europe — to Paris, Salamanca, Alcala, to Douay, Toulouse, and Louvain, to Padua and Bologna, to Naples and Coimbra, and to many another! All know how the fame of these seats of


\(^{(57)}\) Serm. de St. Thom. (Quoted in Aeterni Patris, p. 51)
learning grew with their years, and that their judgment, often asked in matters of grave moment, held great weight everywhere. And we know how in those great homes of human wisdom, as in his own kingdom, Thomas reigned supreme; and that the minds of all, of teachers as well as of taught, retain wonderful harmony under the shield and authority of the Angelic Doctor.(58)

Leo asks that modern men join with the Scholastics of old, study them with an eye to learning their teachings and the method of their teaching. Let modern, clear thinking men become new Scholastics. Let the new Scholastics retain the essence of the teachings of medieval Scholastics concerning God, reality, the nature and the end of man, the process and origin of knowledge, the existence and freedom of the will. Let these Neo-Scholastics reject, in the light of all the discoveries of modern science, theories of physics and natural science which the medieval philosophers grafted upon their principles. Let them remember and promulgate that St. Thomas himself warned his contemporaries that they were assumptions and therefore subject to change.

Let carefully selected teachers endeavour to implant the doctrines of Thomas Aquinas in the minds of students, and set forth clearly his solidity and excellence over others. Let the academies already founded or to be founded by you illustrate and defend this doctrine, and use it for the refutation of prevailing errors.(59)

Here Leo XIII urges the training of teachers in Thomistic philosophy that, firstly, the young, even in the most early

(58) Aeterni Patris, p. 50.
(59) Aeterni Patris, p. 56.
stages of education, may be given a true rational background. Education must be looked upon as a life process and life an educational process with a mutual ultimate aim -- the attainment of eternal salvation. Secondly, teachers must be trained thusly in order that students of higher educational systems may have a direct contact with the truths and discipline of the philosophia perennis. Thirdly, that those contemplating the religious or ecclesiastical state, "those who are the growing hope of the Church," may be so armed with the truth that may advance the cause of religion with force and judgment. Unto the fulfillment of these aims the Pontiff commends those religious orders as exemplary which have already begun to "furnish a generous and copious supply to studious youth of those crystal rills of wisdom flowing in a never-ending and fertilizing stream from the fountain-head of the Angelic Doctor." Succeeding pontiffs have reiterated the mind of the Church by numerous instructions and decrees. And according to the New Code of Canon Law: "students of the seminary must study scholastic philosophy at least for two years. The fundamental principles of metaphysics expounded by St. Thomas are to be taught. This does not imply that every opinion of the Angelic Doctor is imposed on students..."

(60) Aeterni Patris, p. 53.
(61) Rev. P. J. Lydon, Ready Answers in Canon Law, etc., Benziger Brothers, New York, 1934, p. 423. -- We should note that canon 1366, Sec. 2 clearly and explicitly states: Philosophiae rationalis ac theologiae studia et alumnorum in his disciplinis institutionem professores omine pertractent ad Angelici Doctoris patiorem, doctrinam et principias, eaque sancte teneant. Pope Pius XI regards this canon as "as a sacred command." (Cf., Donald Attwater, The Catholic Encyclopaedic Dictionary, The Macmillan Co., New York, 1931, p. 523.)
Leo XIII did not rest content with the publishing of *Aeterni Patris* in his efforts to make certain a Scholastic restoration. He went farther: He preached the new and desirable philosophical order in deed and example. After a year he proclaimed St. Thomas Aquinas patron of all Catholic universities, academies, colleges, and schools. In 1879 he announced his intention of founding a philosophical academy at Rome to defend and explain Thomism, and then announced his plans for a new edition of the works of St. Thomas. On May 3, 1880 the Academy was inaugurated with Cardinal Pecci, brother of Leo XIII, as its president. To the Order of St. Dominic was entrusted the tedious work of the new edition of St. Thomas — at their disposal for this task the Pope placed three thousand francs.

Furthermore, Leo desired that students of the philosophy or theology of St. Thomas would participate in public exercises in Scholasticism to be held in his presence in the Vatican. The participants were to be chosen from the students of the Roman Seminary, the Propaganda College, and the Gregorian University.

In 1880 the Pope requested that a chair of Thomistic philosophy be set up in the University of Louvain. Concerning this Leo XIII wrote to Cardinal Deschamps of the necessity of a solid defence against the attacks of materialists and unbelievers favored by that unbridled liberty of thought and writing prevailing in Belgium. He stressed the need of a solid philosophical training in as much as university students would one
day be called to fill civil offices and to take part in the government of the country, which could only gain by being inspired with the teachings of the true philosophy. After this letter of 1830 the seat of philosophy was established at Louvain, the first home of formal Neo-Scholasticism. In a second brief of 1889 the Pontiff insisted on a development in teaching Thomism in its relation with the natural sciences, and proceeded to endow the University of Louvain with one hundred and fifty thousand francs for the founding of the new chair to dispute with unbelief on its own ground, that of the natural sciences. In 1895 he wrote asking that this latter institution be annexed to a seminary for the philosophical training of ecclesiastical students.

Similarly Leo XIII patronized centers for Thomistic study at Paris, Fribourg, and Salzburg, and also at the Catholic University of America at Washington which he personally chartered in 1889. The ideal expressed by Leo was that the American Catholic University should be the center about which all would gather who love the teachings of the Catholic Faith.

*Whether the modern exponent of perennial philosophy select the title Scholastic, Thomist, Neo-Scholastic or Neo-Thomist will make little difference so long as his work is carried on under the general Thomistic guidance indicated by Leo XIII. That there may be some divergence, however, between the Thomist and the Scholastic accidentalia is readily admitted.

The purpose of the founding of this University, then, was to transmit to American life those elements of truth which have been the acquisition of the oldest continuous culture in the world, Catholic culture.

In the brief, *Gravissime Nos*, sent in 1892 to the Society of Jesus the Pontiff spoke thus regarding the new Scholastic movement:

> We understood perfectly well that we were undertaking a task full of toil and care, as it meant scarcely less than the reform of the most important branches of knowledge. Yet we have tried to mature it and bring it to a happy issue, counting especially on the assistance of the religious orders, whose tried virtue spares neither strength nor talents to support and carry out our plans. (64)

From further comment in the *Gravissime Nos* it was evident that the philosophy of St. Thomas was to guide the Jesuits on all matters of any importance — that is, if any of their own teachers differed on any point from the certain doctrine of St. Thomas, it was to St. Thomas they should have recourse.

Likewise, did the Pontiff encourage the study of Church history. By 1885 he had thrown open the Vatican archives and library to historical research. No means of furthering inquiry was passed by. Singular honors were bestowed on those scholars who had labored for the cause of the new Scholasticism — Newman, Hergenröther, Denifle, Grisar, Pastor, Gasquet, Mercier, Mancini, Ulysse, Chevalier, Luchaire, Duchesne, and Baudrillart. A growing litany of more recent names, illustrious and prominent, both European and American, could be included here.

(64) Leo XIII, *Gravissime Nos*. (Quoted in Furey, *Life of Leo XIII*, p. III.)
The advance of Scholasticism was rapidly making itself felt in the nineteenth century. For a completion of this advance philosophy would have to be popularized. It could not, as before, remain the exclusive property of the learned and speculative students only. Attempts were made to make the teachings of St. Thomas accessible to the unprofessional student where the ground had been sufficiently prepared for such work. Peré Lévy made this attempt, and successfully, of treating in the form of conferences some of the questions from the *Summa Theologica* for the benefit of an intelligent laity. In England, Father Clarke, with the aid of a number of professors of philosophy at Stonyhurst, undertook the publication of a course of manuals of Christian philosophy. The aim of these works was to make the English reader familiar with the teachings of St. Thomas, divested of the technicalities of language and the strangeness of form which presented the main difficulties to an interest and appreciation of St. Thomas. (65)

This was the great difficulty in transmitting the teachings of Scholasticism to the laity — the terminology was new and unfamiliar to those men who had not been trained in it. But it was not a matter of accident with St. Thomas and the others that the language of the schools had been adopted. There was historical reason: Aristotle had, as it were, laid the foundation of exact thinking more than three centuries before the

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Christian era. The Greek version of his works, later turned into Arabic and thence into Latin, had long been the text of the lectures delivered in philosophic schools. So when the teachers of the medieval universities began to give definite scientific form to the theological studies, they, of necessity, adhered to the exact and close reasoning of the medieval philosophers, both because it was best adapted to the mental training of their hearers, and the safest path by which to limit the vagaries of free speculation. To this terminology St. Thomas fell heir and as a writer of his time made use of it. Thus the exponents of the new Scholasticism had the grave responsibility that if they desired to simplify terminology, they must not meddle with exact meanings to the destruction of truth and mental discipline.

So because of the measures taken by Leo XIII and of the directions given to the many secular and regular institutions, a peace was effected in Catholic schools of thought. Internal dissensions ceased to agitate. Heterodox philosophers, who themselves felt the counter-effect of the Pope's words, applauded the intellectual activity thereby stimulated. The world began to recognize that in Scholasticism there is a most lofty form of human thought, and people returned to its study. Though among many the aim of Scholasticism whetted only scientific curiosity, to others it became the form of true philosophical research. Scholasticism began to show itself as the medium of an evolution of non-Catholic thought in the direction of Christian philosophy.
Concerning the Gregorian Papal University Leo XIII wrote:

We feel happy because in the Gregorian Papal University, established, so to say, under our eyes, to which we have given attentive anxiety and care, our desires and orders have been abundantly satisfied. The reason is because we see it flourish in the great number of students and the reputation of sound and solid teaching.(66)

The success of this university we note as important, not so much as the success of one Catholic university, but because it is exemplary of the world-wide growing progress of the new Scholastic movement. *

Of Neo-Scholasticism itself, as we know it today, let us note that it had its beginnings with the publication of the Aeterni Patris since from that time on Scholasticism began to accommodate itself to the thought of our own day. This has been accomplished, in the main, because of two orientations: firstly, by its contact with the natural sciences and its care to supply explanation of the material and moral world by noting the sum and total of the facts; and, secondly, by its contact with all other contemporary philosophies and the comparing of its own findings with theirs by attention to the history of philosophy. Neo-Scholasticism has ever tended more and more to become the philosophy of Catholics. It has, indeed, replaced

(66) Leo XIII, Gravissime Non, (Quoted in Furey, Life of Leo XIII, p. 113.)

* That this authoritative interest of the Church in Thomistic Scholasticism continues explicitly and officially is evidenced by the motu proprio "Doctoris Angelici" of Pius X, by the encyclical Pascendi of Benedict XV and by the encyclical Studiourm Ducem of Pius XI.
the systems of Ontologism, Traditionalism and Cartesianism which have all been weighed and found inefficient. But the appeal of the new-Scholasticism is not merely to Catholics; on the contrary, its conception of the universe and of human life is such that it interests every unprejudiced mind, quite independently of religious beliefs.

"Vetera Novis Augere Et Perficere!"

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* Aeterni Patris, as found in the Leonine edition of the Summa Theologica, vol. VI, p. 431. (Rome, Ex Typographia Senatoris, Forzani et Sodalis, M DCCC LXXXVII.)

This oft quoted phrase, "To strengthen and complete the old by aid of the new," in its original setting indicates what those should do who wrongly disregard the precious traditions of the past and attempt to build up a complete structure of truth on the foundation of mere modernity. The words form a motto and veritable summary of Leo's plan of Scholastic restoration.
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