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# St. Thomas Aquinas

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

## Life

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

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

About the year 1236 he was sent to the University of [Naples](#). Calo says that the change was made at the instance of the [Abbot](#) of [Monte Cassino](#), who wrote to Thomas's father that a boy of such talents should not be left in obscurity (Prümmer, op. cit., 20). At [Naples](#) his preceptors were Pietro Martini and Petrus Hibernus. The chronicler says that he soon surpassed Martini at grammar, and he was then given over to Peter of Ireland, who trained him in [logic](#) and the [natural sciences](#). The customs of the times divided the [liberal arts](#) into two courses: the Trivium, embracing grammar, [logic](#), and rhetoric; the Quadrivium, comprising music, mathematics, geometry, and [astronomy](#) . . . . Thomas could repeat the lessons with more depth and lucidity than his masters displayed. The youth's heart had remained pure amidst the corruption with which he was surrounded, and he resolved to embrace the [religious life](#).

Some [time](#) between 1240 and August, 1243, he received the habit of the [Order of St. Dominic](#), being attracted and directed by John of St. Julian, a noted preacher of the [convent](#)

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

**The [time](#) spent in captivity was not lost.** His mother relented somewhat, after the first burst of [anger](#) and grief; the [Dominicans](#) were allowed to provide him with new habits, and through the kind offices of his sister he procured some books — the [Holy Scriptures](#), [Aristotle's Metaphysics](#), and the "Sentences" of [Peter Lombard](#). After eighteen months or two years spent in [prison](#), either because his mother saw that the [hermit's prophecy](#) would eventually be fulfilled or because his brothers [feared](#) the threats of [Innocent IV](#) and [Frederick II](#), he was set at liberty, being lowered in a basket into the arms of the [Dominicans](#), who were delighted to find that during his captivity "he had made as much progress as if he had been in a *studium generale*" (Calo, op. cit., 24).

**Thomas immediately pronounced his [vows](#), and his superiors sent him to [Rome](#).** [Innocent IV](#) examined closely into his motives in joining the [Friars Preachers](#), dismissed him with a [blessing](#), and forbade any further interference with his [vocation](#). John the Teutonic, fourth master general of the [order](#), took the young student to [Paris](#) and, according to the majority of the [saint's](#) biographers, to [Cologne](#), where he arrived in 1244 or 1245, and was placed under [Albertus Magnus](#), the most renowned professor of the [order](#). In the schools Thomas's [humility](#) and taciturnity were misinterpreted as signs of dullness, but when [Albert](#) had heard his brilliant defence of a difficult thesis, he exclaimed: "We call this young man a dumb ox, but his bellowing in [doctrine](#) will one day resound throughout the world."

**In 1245 [Albert](#) was sent to [Paris](#), and Thomas accompanied him as a student.** In 1248 both returned to [Cologne](#). [Albert](#) had been appointed regent of the new *studium generale*, erected that year by the [general chapter](#) of the [order](#), and Thomas was to teach under him as Bachelor. (On the system of graduation in the thirteenth century see [ORDER OF PREACHERS](#) — II, A, 1, d). During his stay in [Cologne](#), probably in 1250, he was raised to the [priesthood](#) by [Conrad of Hochstaden](#), [archbishop](#) of that city. Throughout his busy life, he frequently preached the Word of God, in [Germany](#), [France](#), and [Italy](#). His [sermons](#) were forceful, redolent of [piety](#), full of solid instruction, abounding in apt citations from the [Scriptures](#).

**In the year 1251 or 1252 the master general of the [order](#), by the advice of [Albertus Magnus](#) and [Hugo a S. Charo \(Hugh of St. Cher\)](#), sent Thomas to fill the office of Bachelor (sub-regent) in the [Dominican studium](#) at [Paris](#).** This appointment may be

regarded as the beginning of his public career, for his teaching soon attracted the attention both of the professors and of the students. His [duties](#) consisted principally in explaining the "Sentences" of [Peter Lombard](#), and his commentaries on that text-book of [theology](#) furnished the materials and, in great part, the plan for his chief work, the "[Summa theologica](#)".

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

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

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

**Yielding to the requests of his brethren, he on several occasions took part in the deliberations of the [general chapters](#) of the [order](#).** One of these [chapters](#) was held in

[London](#) in 1263. In another held at Valenciennes (1259) he collaborated with [Albertus Magnus](#) and Peter of Tarentasia (afterwards [Pope Innocent V](#)) in formulating a system of studies which is substantially preserved to this day in the *studia generalia* of the [Dominican Order](#) (cf. Douais, op. cit.).

**It is not surprising to read in the biographies of St. Thomas that he was frequently abstracted and in [ecstasy](#).** Towards the end of his life the [ecstasies](#) became more frequent. On one occasion, at [Naples](#) in 1273, after he had completed his treatise on the [Eucharist](#), three of the brethren saw him lifted in [ecstasy](#), and they heard a [voice](#) proceeding from the [crucifix on the altar](#), saying "Thou hast written well of me, Thomas; what reward wilt thou have?" Thomas replied, "None other than Thyself, Lord" (Prümmer, op. cit., p. 38). Similar declarations are said to have been made at [Orvieto](#) and at [Paris](#).

**On 6 December, 1273, he laid aside his pen and would write no more.** That day he experienced an unusually long [ecstasy](#) during [Mass](#); what was revealed to him we can only surmise from his reply to [Father Reginald](#), who urged him to continue his writings: "I can do no more. Such secrets have been revealed to me that all I have written now appears to be of little value" (*modica*, Prümmer, op. cit., p. 43). The "[Summa theologica](#)" had been completed only as far as the [ninetieth question of the third part](#) (De partibus poenitentiae).

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

**The end was near; [extreme unction](#) was administered.** When the [Sacred Viaticum](#) was brought into the room he pronounced the following act of [faith](#):

**If in this world there be any [knowledge](#) of this [sacrament](#) stronger than that of [faith](#), I wish now to use it in affirming that I firmly [believe](#) and [know](#) as [certain](#) that [Jesus Christ, True God and True Man, Son of God and Son of the Virgin Mary, is in this Sacrament](#) . . . I receive Thee, the price of my [redemption](#), for Whose [love](#) I have watched, studied, and laboured. Thee have I preached; Thee have I taught. Never have I said anything against Thee: if anything was not well said, that is to be attributed to my [ignorance](#). Neither do I wish to be obstinate in my opinions, but if I have written anything [erroneous](#) concerning this [sacrament](#) or other matters, I submit all to the judgment and correction of the [Holy Roman Church](#), in whose [obedience](#) I now pass from this life.**

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

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

## Writings (general remarks)

**Although St. Thomas lived less than fifty years, he composed more than sixty works, some of them brief, some very lengthy.** This does not necessarily mean that every word in the [authentic](#) works was written by his hand; he was assisted by secretaries, and biographers assure us that he could dictate to several scribes at the same [time](#). Other works, some of which were composed by his [disciples](#), have been falsely attributed to him.

In the "Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum" (Paris, 1719) [Fr. Echard](#) devotes eighty-six folio pages to St. Thomas's works, the different editions and translations (I, pp. 282-348). [Touron](#) (op. cit., pp. 69 sqq.) says that [manuscript](#) copies were found in nearly all the [libraries](#) of [Europe](#), and that, after the invention of printing, copies were multiplied rapidly in [Germany](#), [Italy](#), and [France](#), portions of the "[Summa theologica](#)" being one of the first important works printed. [Peter Schöffer](#), a printer of [Mainz](#), published the "[Secunda Secundae](#)" in 1467. This is the first known printed copy of any work of St. Thomas. The first complete edition of the "[Summa](#)" was printed at [Basle](#), in 1485. Many other editions of this and of other works were published in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, especially at [Venice](#) and at [Lyons](#). The principal editions of all the work (Opera Omnia) were published as follows: [Rome](#), 1570; Venice, 1594, 1612, 1745; Antwerp, 1612; [Paris](#), 1660, 1871-80 ([Vives](#)); Parma, 1852-73; Rome, 1882 (the Leonine). The [Roman](#) edition of 1570, called "the Piana", because edited by order of [St. Pius V](#), was the standard for many years. Besides a carefully revised text it contained the commentaries of [Cardinal Cajetan](#) and the valuable "Tabula Aurea" of [Peter of Bergamo](#). The [Venetian](#) edition of 1612 was highly prized because the text was accompanied by the [Cajetan-Porrecta](#) commentaries . . . . The Leonine edition, begun under the patronage of [Leo XIII](#), now continued under the master general of the [Dominicans](#), undoubtedly will be

the most perfect of all. Critical dissertations on each work will be given, the text will be carefully revised, and all references will be verified. By direction of [Leo XIII \(Motu Proprio, 18 Jan., 1880\)](#) the "Summa contra gentiles" will be published with the commentaries of Sylvester Ferrariensis, whilst the commentaries of [Cajetan](#) go with the "[Summa theologica](#)".

The latter has been published, being volumes IV-XII of the edition (last in 1906). St. Thomas's works may be classified as [philosophical](#), [theological](#), [scriptural](#), and [apologetic](#), or controversial. The division, however, cannot always be rigidly maintained. The "[Summa theologica](#)", e.g., contains much that is [philosophical](#), whilst the "Summa contra gentiles" is principally, but not exclusively, [philosophical](#) and [apologetic](#). His [philosophical](#) works are chiefly commentaries on [Aristotle](#), and his first important [theological](#) writings were commentaries on [Peter Lombard's](#) four books of "Sentences"; but he does not slavishly follow either the [Philosopher](#) or the [Master of the Sentences](#) (on opinions of the [Lombard](#) rejected by [theologians](#), see [Migne](#), 1841, edition of the "[Summa](#)" I, p. 451).

## Writings (his principal works)

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

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

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

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

(4) "*Commentaria in Libros Sententiarum*" (*mentioned above*) -- This with the following work are the immediate forerunners of the "[Summa theologica](#)".

(5) "*Summa de veritate catholicae fidei contra gentiles*" (*Treatise on the Truth of the Catholic Faith, against Unbelievers*) -- This work, written at [Rome](#), 1261-64, was composed at the request of [St. Raymond of Pennafort](#), who desired to have a [philosophical](#) exposition and defence of the [Christian Faith](#), to be used against the [Jews](#) and [Moors](#) in [Spain](#). It is a perfect model of patient and sound [apologetics](#), showing that no demonstrated [truth \(science\)](#) is opposed to [revealed truth \(faith\)](#). The best recent editions are those of [Rome](#), 1878 (by Uccelli), of [Paris](#) and [Fribourg, Switzerland](#), 1882, and of [Rome](#), 1894. It has been translated

into many languages. It is divided into four books: I. Of God as He is in Himself; II. Of God the Origin of Creatures; III. Of God the End of Creatures; IV. Of God in His Revelation. It is worthy of remark that the Fathers of the [Vatican Council](#), treating the [necessity of revelation](#) (Constitution "Dei Filius", c. 2), employed almost the very words used by St. Thomas in treating that subject in this work (I, cc. iv, V), and in the "[Summa theologica](#)" (I:1:1).

**(6) Three works written by order of [Urban IV](#) --**

- The "Opusculum contra errores Graecorum" refuted the [errors](#) of the [Greeks](#) on doctrines in dispute between them and the [Roman Church](#), viz., the procession of the [Holy Ghost](#) from the Father [and the Son](#), the [primacy](#) of the [Roman pontiff](#), the [Holy Eucharist](#), and [purgatory](#). It was used against the [Greeks](#) with telling effect in the [Council of Lyons](#) (1274) and in the [Council of Florence](#) (1493). In the range of human reasonings on deep subjects there can be found nothing to surpass the sublimity and depth of the argument adduced by St. Thomas to [prove](#) that the [Holy Ghost](#) proceeds from the Father [and the Son](#) (cf. [Summa I:36:2](#)); but it must be borne in mind that our [Faith](#) is not based on that argument alone.
- "Officium de festo Corporis Christi". Mandonnet (Ecrits, p. 127) declares that it is now established beyond [doubt](#) that St. Thomas is the author of the beautiful [Office of Corpus Christi](#), in which solid [doctrine](#), tender [piety](#), and enlightening [Scriptural](#) citations are combined, and expressed in language remarkably accurate, beautiful, [chaste](#), and poetic. Here we find the well-known [hymns](#), "[Sacris Solemniis](#)", "[Pange Lingua](#)" (concluding in the "[Tantum Ergo](#)"), "[Verbum Supernum](#)" (concluding with the "[O Salutaris Hostia](#)") and, in the [Mass](#), the beautiful [sequence](#) "[Lauda Sion](#)". In the [responses](#) of the [office](#), St. Thomas places side by side words of the [New Testament](#) affirming the [real presence](#) of [Christ](#) in the [Blessed Sacrament](#) and texts from the [Old Testament](#) referring to the [types](#) and figures of the [Eucharist](#). Santeuil, a poet of the seventeenth century, said he would give all the verses he had written for the one [stanza](#) of the "[Verbum Supernum](#)": "Se nascens dedit socium, convescens in edulium: Se moriens in pretium, Se regnans dat in praemium" — "In birth, man's fellow-man was He, His meat, while sitting at the Board: He died his Ransomer to be, He reigns to be his Great Reward" (tr. by [Marquis of Bute](#)). Perhaps the gem of the whole office is the [antiphon](#) "O Sacrum Convivium" (cf. Conway, "St. Thomas Aquinas", London and New York, 1911, p. 61).
- The "Catena Aurea", though not as original as his other writings, furnishes a striking [proof](#) of St. Thomas's prodigious [memory](#) and manifests an intimate acquaintance with the [Fathers of the Church](#). The work contains a series of passages selected from the writings of the various [Fathers](#), arranged in such order that the texts cited form a running [commentary](#) on the [Gospels](#). The [commentary](#) on [St. Matthew](#) was dedicated to [Urban IV](#). An English translation of the "Catena Aurea" was edited by [John Henry Newman](#) (4 vols., Oxford, 1841-1845; see Vaughan, op. cit., vol. II,) pp. 529 sqq..

**(7) The "[Summa theologica](#)"--** This work immortalized St. Thomas. The author himself modestly considered it simply a manual of [Christian doctrine](#) for the use of students. In reality it is a complete scientifically arranged exposition of [theology](#) and at the same time a summary of [Christian philosophy](#) (see [SUMMÆ](#)). In the brief [prologue](#) St. Thomas first calls attention to the difficulties experienced by students of [sacred doctrine](#) in his day, the causes assigned being: the multiplication of useless questions, articles, and arguments; the lack of scientific order; frequent repetitions, "which beget disgust and confusion in the [minds](#) of learners". Then he adds: "Wishing to avoid these and similar drawbacks, we shall endeavour,

confiding in the Divine assistance, to treat of these things that pertain to [sacred doctrine](#) with brevity and clearness, in so far as the subject to be treated will permit."

In the introductory question, "[On Sacred Doctrine](#)", he [proves](#) that, besides the [knowledge](#) which [reason](#) affords, [Revelation](#) also is [necessary](#) for [salvation](#) first, because without it [men](#) could not [know](#) the [supenatural](#) end to which they must tend by their [voluntary acts](#); secondly, because, without [Revelation](#), even the [truths](#) concerning [God](#) which could be [proved](#) by [reason](#) would be [known](#) "only by a few, after a long [time](#), and with the admixture of many [errors](#)". When [revealed truths](#) have been accepted, the [mind](#) of [man](#) proceeds to explain them and to draw conclusions from them. Hence results [theology](#), which is a [science](#), because it proceeds from principles that are [certain](#) ([Answer 2](#)). The object, or subject, of this [science](#) is [God](#); other things are treated in it only in so far as they relate to [God](#) ([Answer 7](#)). [Reason](#) is used in [theology](#) not to [prove](#) the [truths](#) of [faith](#), which are accepted on the authority of [God](#), but to defend, explain, and develop the doctrines revealed ([Answer 8](#)). He thus announces the division of the "[Summa](#)": "Since the chief aim of this [sacred science](#) is to give the [knowledge](#) of [God](#), not only as He is in Himself, but also as He is the Beginning of all things, and the End of all, especially of rational creatures, we shall treat first of [God](#); secondly, of the rational creature's advance towards [God](#) (*de motu creaturae rationalis in Deum*); thirdly, of [Christ](#), Who, as [Man](#), is the way by which we tend to [God](#)." [God](#) in Himself, and as He is the Creator; [God](#) as the End of all things, especially of [man](#); [God](#) as the Redeemer — these are the leading [ideas](#), the great headings, under which all that pertains to [theology](#) is contained.

#### (a) *Sub-divisions*

The [First Part](#) is divided into three tracts:

- On those things which pertain to the [Essence of God](#);
- On the distinction of [Persons](#) in [God](#) (the [mystery](#) of the [Trinity](#));
- On the [production of creatures](#) by [God](#) and on the creatures produced.

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

The [First of the Second](#). The first five questions are devoted to [proving](#) that [man's](#) last end, his [beatitude](#), consists in the possession of [God](#). [Man](#) attains to that end or deviates from it by [human acts](#), i.e. by free, deliberate acts. Of [human acts](#) he treats, first, in general (in all but the first five questions of the [I-II](#)), secondly, in particular (in the whole of the [II-II](#)). The treatise on [human acts](#) in general is divided into two parts: the first, on [human acts](#) in themselves; the other, on the principles or causes, extrinsic or intrinsic, of those [acts](#). In these tracts and in the [Second of the Second](#), St. Thomas, following [Aristotle](#), gives a perfect description and a wonderfully keen [analysis](#) of the movements of [man's mind](#) and [heart](#).

The [Second of the Second](#) considers [human acts](#), i.e., the [virtues](#) and [vices](#), in particular. In it St. Thomas treats, first, of those things that pertain to all [men](#), no matter what may be their station in life, and, secondly, of those things that pertain to some [men](#) only. Things that pertain to all [men](#) are reduced to seven headings: [Faith](#), [Hope](#), and [Charity](#); [Prudence](#), [Justice](#), [Fortitude](#), and [Temperance](#). Under each title, in order to avoid repetitions, St. Thomas treats

not only of the [virtue](#) itself, but also of the [vices](#) opposed to it, of the [commandment](#) to practise it, and of the [gift](#) of the [Holy Ghost](#) which corresponds to it. Things pertaining to some [men](#) only are reduced to three headings: the [graces](#) freely given (*gratia gratis datae*) to certain individuals for the [good](#) of the [Church](#), such as the [gifts](#) of [tongues](#), of [prophecy](#), of [miracles](#); the active and the [contemplative life](#); the particular states of life, and [duties](#) of those who are in different states, especially [bishops](#) and [religious](#).

The [Third Part](#) treats of [Christ](#) and of the benefits which He has conferred upon [man](#), hence three tracts: On the [Incarnation](#), and on what the [Saviour](#) did and suffered; On the [Sacraments](#), which were instituted by [Christ](#), and have their efficacy from His [merits](#) and [sufferings](#); On Eternal Life, i.e., on the end of the world, the [resurrection of bodies](#), [judgment](#), the [punishment of the wicked](#), the [happiness](#) of the just who, through [Christ](#), attain to [eternal life](#) in [heaven](#).

Eight years were given to the composition of this work, which was begun at [Rome](#), where the [First Part](#) and the [First of the Second](#) were written (1265-69). The [Second of the Second](#), begun in [Rome](#), was completed in [Paris](#) (1271). In 1272 St. Thomas went to [Naples](#), where the [Third Part](#) was written, down to the [ninetieth question](#) of the tract On Penance (*see* Leonine edition, I, p. xlii). The work has been completed by the addition of a [supplement](#), drawn from other writings of St. Thomas, attributed by some to [Peter of Auvergne](#), by others to Henry of Gorkum. These attributions are rejected by the editors of the Leonine edition (XI, pp. viii, xiv, xviii). Mandonnet (*op. cit.*, 153) inclines to the very probable opinion that it was compiled by [Father Reginald de Piperno](#), the [saint's](#) faithful companion and secretary.

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

(b) *Editions and Translations*

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

## Writings (method and style)

**It is not possible to characterize the method of St. Thomas by one word, unless it can be called [eclectic](#).** It is [Aristotelean](#), [Platonic](#), and [Socratic](#); it is [inductive](#) and [deductive](#); it is [analytic](#) and synthetic. He chose the best that could he find in those who preceded him, carefully sifting the chaff from the wheat, approving what was [true](#), rejecting the [false](#). His powers of synthesis were extraordinary. No writer surpassed him in the faculty of expressing in a few well-chosen words the [truth](#) gathered from a multitude of varying and conflicting opinions; and in almost every instance the student sees the [truth](#) and is perfectly satisfied with St. Thomas's summary and statement. Not that he would have students swear by the words of a master. In [philosophy](#), he says, arguments from authority are of secondary importance; [philosophy](#) does not consist in knowing what [men](#) have said, but in knowing the [truth](#) (In I lib. de Coelo, lect. xxii; II Sent., D. xiv, a. 2, ad Ium). He assigns its proper place to [reason](#) used in [theology](#) (see below: Influence of St. Thomas), but he keeps it within its own sphere. Against the [Traditionalists](#) the [Holy See](#) has declared that the method used by St. Thomas and [St. Bonaventure](#) does not lead to [Rationalism](#) ([Denzinger-Bannwart](#), n. 1652). Not so bold or original in investigating nature as were [Albertus Magnus](#) and [Roger Bacon](#), he was, nevertheless, abreast of his [time](#) in [science](#), and many of his opinions are of [scientific](#) value in the twentieth century. Take, for instance, the following: "In the same plant there is the two-fold virtue, active and passive, though sometimes the active is found in one and the passive in another, so that one plant is said to be masculine and the other feminine" (3 Sent., D. III, Q. ii, a 1).

**The style of St. Thomas is a medium between the rough expressiveness of some [Scholastics](#) and the fastidious elegance of [John of Salisbury](#); it is remarkable for accuracy, brevity, and completeness.** [Pope Innocent VI](#) (quoted in the [Encyclical](#), "[Aeterni Patris](#)", of [Leo XIII](#)) declared that, with the exception of the [canonical writings](#), the works of St. Thomas surpass all others in "accuracy of expression and [truth](#) of statement" (*habet proprietatem verborum, modum dicendorum, veritatem sententiarum*). Great orators, such as [Bossuet](#), [Lacordaire](#), [Monsabré](#), have studied his style, and have been influenced by it, but they could not reproduce it. The same is [true](#) of [theological](#) writers. [Cajetan](#) [knew](#) St. Thomas's style better than any of his [disciples](#), but [Cajetan](#) is beneath his great master in clearness and accuracy of expression, in soberness and solidity of judgment. St. Thomas did not attain to this perfection without an effort. He was a singularly [blessed](#) genius, but he was

also an indefatigable worker, and by continued application he reached that stage of perfection in the art of writing where the art disappears. "The author's [manuscript](#) of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* is still in great part extant. It is now in the [Vatican Library](#). The [manuscript](#) consists of strips of parchment, of various shades of colour, contained in an old parchment cover to which they were originally stitched. The writing is in double column, and difficult to decipher, abounding in abbreviations, often passing into a kind of shorthand. Throughout many passages a line is drawn in sign of erasure" (Rickaby, Op. cit., preface: see Ucelli ed., "Sum. cont. gent.", Rome, 1878).

## Influences exerted on St. Thomas

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

### Natural causes

- (1) As a foundation, he "was a witty child, and had received a [good soul](#)" ([Wisdom 8:19](#)). From the beginning he manifested precocious and extraordinary talent and thoughtfulness beyond his years.
- (2) His [education](#) was such that great things might have been expected of him. His training at [Monte Cassino](#), at [Naples](#), [Paris](#), and [Cologne](#) was the best that the thirteenth century could give, and that century was the golden age of [education](#). That it afforded excellent opportunities for forming great [philosophers](#) and [theologians](#) is evident from the character of St. Thomas's contemporaries. [Alexander of Hales](#), [Albertus Magnus](#), [St. Bonaventure](#), [St. Raymond of Pennafort](#), [Roger Bacon](#), [Hugo a S. Charo](#), [Vincent of Beauvais](#), not to mention scores of others, [prove](#) beyond all [doubt](#) that those were days of really great scholars. (See Walsh, "The Thirteenth, Greatest of Centuries", New York, 1907.) The men who trained St. Thomas were his teachers at [Monte Cassino](#) and [Naples](#), but above all [Albertus Magnus](#), under whom he studied at [Paris](#) and [Cologne](#).
- (3) The books that exercised the greatest influence on his [mind](#) were the [Bible](#), the [Decrees](#) of the [councils](#) and of the [popes](#), the works of the [Fathers](#), Greek and [Latin](#), especially of [St. Augustine](#), the "Sentences" of [Peter Lombard](#), the writings of the [philosophers](#), especially of [Plato](#), [Aristotle](#), and [Boethius](#). If from these authors any were to be selected for special mention, undoubtedly they would be [Aristotle](#), [St. Augustine](#), and [Peter Lombard](#). In another sense the writings of St. Thomas were influenced by [Averroes](#), the chief opponent whom he had to combat in order to defend and make [known](#) the [true Aristotle](#).
- (4) It must be borne in mind that St. Thomas was [blessed](#) with a retentive [memory](#) and great powers of penetration. Father Daniel d'Agusta once pressed him to say what he considered the greatest [grace](#) he had ever received, [sanctifying grace](#) of course excepted. "I think that of having understood whatever I have read", was the reply. [St. Antoninus](#) declared that "he [remembered](#) everything he had read, so that his [mind](#) was like a huge [library](#)" (cf. [Drane](#), op. cit., p. 427; [Vaughan](#), op. cit., II, p. 567). The bare enumeration of the texts of [Scripture](#) cited in the "[Summa theologica](#)" fills eighty small-print columns in the [Migne](#) edition, and by many it is not unreasonably supposed that he learned the [Sacred Books](#) by heart while he was [imprisoned](#) in the Castle of San Giovanni. Like [St. Dominic](#) he had a special [love](#) for the [Epistles](#) of [St. Paul](#), on which he wrote [commentaries](#) (recent edition in 2 vols., Turin, 1891).

(5) Deep reverence for the [Faith](#), as made [known](#) by [tradition](#), characterizes all his writings. The *consuetudo ecclesiae* — the practice of the [Church](#) — should prevail over the authority of any [doctor](#) ([Summa II-II:10:12](#)). In the "[Summa](#)" he quotes from 19 [councils](#), 41 [popes](#), and 52 [Fathers of the Church](#). A slight acquaintance with his writings will show that among the [Fathers](#) his favourite was [St. Augustine](#) (on the [Greek Fathers](#) see Vaughan, op. cit., II, cc. iii sqq.).

(6) With [St. Augustine](#) (*On Christian Doctrine II.40*), St. Thomas held that whatever there was of [truth](#) in the writings of [pagan philosophers](#) should be taken from them, as from "unjust possessors", and adapted to the teaching of the [true religion](#) ([Summa I:84:5](#)). In the "[Summa](#)" alone he quotes from the writings of 46 [philosophers](#) and poets, his favourite authors being [Aristotle](#), [Plato](#), and, among [Christian](#) writers, [Boethius](#). From [Aristotle](#) he learned that love of order and accuracy of expression which are characteristic of his own works. From [Boethius](#) he learned that [Aristotle's](#) works could be used without detriment to [Christianity](#). He did not follow [Boethius](#) in his vain attempt to reconcile [Plato](#) and [Aristotle](#). In general the [Stagirite](#) was his master, but the elevation and grandeur of St. Thomas's conceptions and the majestic dignity of his methods of treatment speak strongly of the sublime [Plato](#).

## Supernatural causes

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

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

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

(3) Facts narrated by [persons](#) who either [knew](#) St. Thomas in life or wrote at about the [time](#) of his [canonization](#) [prove](#) that he received assistance from [heaven](#). To [Father Reginald](#) he declared that he had learned more in [prayer](#) and [contemplation](#) than he had acquired from [men](#) or books (Prümmer, op. cit., p. 36). These same authors tell of mysterious visitors who came to encourage and enlighten him. The [Blessed Virgin appeared](#), to assure him that his life and his writings were acceptable to [God](#), and that he would persevere in his [holy vocation](#). Sts. [Peter](#) and [Paul](#) came to aid him in interpreting an obscure passage in [Isaias](#). When [humility](#) [caused](#) him to consider himself unworthy of the doctorate, a venerable [religious](#) of his [order](#) (supposed to be [St. Dominic](#)) appeared to encourage him and suggested the text for his opening discourse (Prümmer, op. cit., 29, 37; Tocco in "Acta SS.", VII Mar.; Vaughan, op. cit., II, 91). His [ecstasies](#) have been mentioned. His abstractions in presence of [King Louis IX \(St. Louis\)](#) and of distinguished visitors are related by all biographers. Hence, even if allowance be made for great enthusiasm on the part of his admirers, we must conclude

that his extraordinary learning cannot be attributed to merely natural causes. Of him it may truly be said that he laboured as if all depended on his own efforts and [prayed](#) as if all depended on [God](#).

## Influence of St. Thomas (on sanctity)

The great [Scholastics](#) were [holy](#) as well as learned men. [Alexander of Hales](#), [St. Albertus Magnus](#), St. Thomas, and [St. Bonaventure](#) [prove](#) that learning does not necessarily dry up devotion. The angelic Thomas and the seraphic [Bonaventure](#) represent the highest types of [Christian](#) scholarship, combining eminent learning with [heroic sanctity](#). [Cardinal Bessarion](#) called St. Thomas "the most [saintly](#) of learned men and the most learned of [saints](#)". His works breathe the spirit of [God](#), a tender and enlightened piety, built on a solid foundation, viz. the [knowledge](#) of [God](#), of [Christ](#), of [man](#). The "[Summa theologica](#)" may be made a manual of piety as well as a text-book for the study of [theology](#) (Cf. [Drane](#), op. cit., p. 446). [St. Francis de Sales](#), [St. Philip Neri](#), [St. Charles Borromeo](#), [St. Vincent Ferrer](#), [St. Pius V](#), [St. Antoninus](#) constantly studied St. Thomas. Nothing could be more inspiring than his treatises on [Christ](#), in His sacred [Person](#), in His [life](#) and [sufferings](#). His treatise on the [sacraments](#), especially on [penance](#) and the [Eucharist](#), would melt even hardened hearts. He takes pains to explain the various [ceremonies of the Mass](#) ("De ritu Eucharistiae" in [Summa III:83](#)), and no writer has explained more clearly than St. Thomas the effects produced in the [souls](#) of [men](#) by this heavenly Bread ([Summa III:79](#)). The principles recently urged, in regard to [frequent Communion](#), by [Pius X](#) ("Sacra Trid. Synodus", 1905) are found in St. Thomas ([Summa III:79:8](#), [III:80:10](#)), although he is not so explicit on this point as he is on the [Communion of children](#). In the [Decree "Quam Singulari"](#) (1910) the [pope](#) cites St. Thomas, who teaches that, when children begin to have some use of [reason](#), so that they can conceive some devotion to the [Blessed Sacrament](#), they may be allowed to communicate ([Summa III:80:9](#)). The spiritual and devotional aspects of St. Thomas's [theology](#) have been pointed out by [Father Contenson, O.P.](#), in his "Theologia mentis et cordis". They are more fully explained by [Father Vallgornera, O.P.](#), in his "Theologia Mystica D. Thomae", wherein the author leads the [soul](#) to [God](#) through the [purgative, illuminative, and unitive ways](#). The [Encyclical Letter](#) of [Leo XIII](#) on the [Holy Spirit](#) is drawn largely from St. Thomas, and those who have studied the "[Prima Secundae](#)" and the "[Secunda Secundae](#)" [know](#) how admirably the [saint](#) explains the gifts and fruits of the [Holy Ghost](#), as well as the [Beatitudes](#), and their relations to the different [virtues](#) Nearly all [good](#) spiritual writers seek in St. Thomas definitions of the [virtues](#) which they recommend.

## Influence of St. Thomas (on intellectual life)

Since the days of [Aristotle](#), probably no one man has exercised such a powerful influence on the thinking world as did St. Thomas. His authority was very great during his lifetime. The [popes](#), the [universities](#), the *studia* of his [order](#) were anxious to profit by his learning and [prudence](#). Several of his important works were written at the request of others, and his opinion was sought by all classes. On several occasions the [doctors](#) of [Paris](#) referred their disputes to him and gratefully abided by his decision (Vaughan, op. cit., II, 1 p. 544). His principles, made [known](#) by his writings, have continued to influence [men](#) even to this day. This subject cannot be considered in all its aspects, nor is that [necessary](#). His influence on matters purely [philosophical](#) is fully explained in histories of [philosophy](#). ([Theologians](#) who followed St. Thomas will be mentioned in [THOMISM](#). See also [ORDER OF PREACHERS](#)) His paramount importance and influence may be explained by considering

him as the [Christian Aristotle](#), combining in his person the best that the world has [known](#) in [philosophy](#) and [theology](#). It is in this light that he is proposed as a model by [Leo XIII](#) in the famous [Encyclical "Aeterni Patris"](#). The work of his life may be summed up in two propositions: he established the [true](#) relations between [faith](#) and [reason](#); he systematized [theology](#).

### (1) Faith and Reason

The principles of St. Thomas on the relations between [faith](#) and [reason](#) were solemnly proclaimed in the [Vatican Council](#). The second, third, and fourth chapters of the Constitution "Dei Filius" read like pages taken from the works of the [Angelic Doctor](#). First, [reason](#) alone is not sufficient to guide [men](#): they need [Revelation](#); we must carefully distinguish the [truths known](#) by [reason](#) from higher [truths \(mysteries\) known](#) by [Revelation](#). Secondly, [reason](#) and [Revelation](#), though distinct, are not opposed to each other. Thirdly, [faith](#) preserves [reason](#) from [error](#); [reason](#) should do service in the cause of [faith](#). Fourthly, this service is rendered in three ways:

- [reason](#) should prepare the [minds](#) of [men](#) to receive the [Faith](#) by [proving](#) the [truths](#) which [faith](#) presupposes (*praeambula fidei*);
- [reason](#) should explain and develop the [truths](#) of [Faith](#) and should propose them in [scientific](#) form;
- [reason](#) should defend the [truths](#) revealed by [Almighty God](#).

This is a development of [St. Augustine's](#) famous saying (*On the Holy Trinity XIV.1*), that the right use of [reason](#) is "that by which the most wholesome [faith](#) is begotten . . . is nourished, defended, and made strong." These principles are proposed by St. Thomas in many places, especially in the following: "In Boethium, da Trin. Proem.", Q. ii, a. 1; "Sum. cont. gent.", I, cc. iii-ix; [Summa I:1:1](#), [I:1:5](#), [I:1:8](#), [I:32:1](#), [I:84:5](#). St. Thomas's services to the [Faith](#) are thus summed up by [Leo XIII](#) in the [Encyclical "Aeterni Patris"](#): "He won this title of distinction for himself: that singlehanded he victoriously combated the [errors](#) of former times, and supplied invincible arms to put to rout those which might in after times spring up. Again, clearly distinguishing, as is fitting, [reason](#) and [faith](#), he both preserved and had regard for the [rights](#) of each; so much so, indeed, that [reason](#), borne on the wings of Thomas, can scarcely rise higher, while [faith](#) could scarcely expect more or stronger aids from [reason](#) than those which she has already obtained through Thomas."

St. Thomas did not combat imaginary foes; he attacked living adversaries. The works of [Aristotle](#) had been introduced into [France](#) in faulty translations and with the misleading commentaries of [Jewish](#) and [Moorish philosophers](#). This gave rise to a flood of [errors](#) which so alarmed the authorities that the reading of [Aristotle's](#) *Physics* and *Metaphysics* was forbidden by [Robert de Courçon](#) in 1210, the [decree](#) being moderated by [Gregory IX](#) in 1231. There crept into the [University of Paris](#) an insidious spirit of irreverence and [Rationalism](#), represented especially by [Abelard](#) and [Raymond Lullus](#), which claimed that [reason](#) could [know](#) and [prove](#) all things, even the [mysteries](#) of [Faith](#). Under the authority of [Averroes](#) dangerous doctrines were propagated, especially two very pernicious [errors](#): first, that [philosophy](#) and [religion](#) being in different regions, what is [true](#) in [religion](#) might be [false](#) in [philosophy](#); secondly, that all [men](#) have but one [soul](#). [Averroes](#) was commonly styled "The Commentator", but St. Thomas says he was "not so much a Peripatetic as a corruptor of Peripatetic [philosophy](#)" (Opusc. de unit. intell.). Applying a principle of [St. Augustine](#) (see [I:84:5](#)), following in the footsteps of [Alexander of Hales](#) and [Albertus Magnus](#), St. Thomas

resolved to take what was [true](#) from the "unjust possessors", in order to press it into the service of [revealed religion](#). Objections to [Aristotle](#) would cease if the [true Aristotle](#) were made [known](#); hence his first care was to obtain a new translation of the works of the great [philosopher](#). [Aristotle](#) was to be purified; [false](#) commentators were to be refuted; the most influential of these was [Averroes](#), hence St. Thomas is continually rejecting his [false](#) interpretations.

## (2) *Theology Systematized*

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

## **Influence of St. Thomas (his doctrine followed)**

Within a short [time](#) after his death the writings of St. Thomas were universally esteemed. The [Dominicans](#) naturally took the lead in following St. Thomas. The [general chapter](#) held in [Paris](#) in 1279 pronounced severe penalties against all who dared to speak irreverently of him or of his writings. The [chapters](#) held in [Paris](#) in 1286, at [Bordeaux](#) in 1287, and at [Lucca](#) in 1288 expressly required the brethren to follow the [doctrine](#) of Thomas, who at that [time](#) had not been [canonized](#) (Const. Ord. Praed., n. 1130). The [University of Paris](#), on the occasion of Thomas's death, sent an official letter of condolence to the [general chapter](#) of the [Dominicans](#), declaring that, equally with his brethren, the [university](#) experienced sorrow at the loss of one who was their own by many titles (*see* text of letter in Vaughan, op. cit., II, p. 82). In the [Encyclical "Aeterni Patris" Leo XIII](#) mentions the [Universities](#) of [Paris](#), [Salamanca](#), [Alcalá](#), [Douai](#), [Toulouse](#), [Louvain](#), [Padua](#), [Bologna](#), [Naples](#), [Coimbra](#) as "the homes of human wisdom where Thomas reigned supreme, and the [minds](#) of all, of teachers as well as of taught, rested in wonderful harmony under the shield and authority of the [Angelic Doctor](#)". To the list may be added [Lima](#) and [Manila](#), [Fribourg](#) and [Washington](#).

[Seminaries](#) and [colleges](#) followed the lead of the [universities](#). The "[Summa](#)" gradually supplanted the "Sentences" as the textbook of [theology](#). [Minds](#) were formed in accordance with the principles of St. Thomas; he became the great master, exercising a world-wide influence on the opinions of [men](#) and on their writings; for even those who did not adopt all of his conclusions were [obliged](#) to give due consideration to his opinions. It has been estimated that 6000 commentaries on St. Thomas's works have been written. Manuals of [theology](#) and of [philosophy](#), composed with the [intention](#) of imparting his teaching,

translations, and studies, or digests (études), of portions of his works have been published in profusion during the last six hundred years and today his name is in [honour](#) all over the world (see [THOMISM](#)).

In every one of the [general councils](#) held since his death St. Thomas has been singularly [honoured](#). At the [Council of Lyons](#) his book "Contra errores Graecorum" was used with telling effect against the [Greeks](#). In later disputes, before and during the [Council of Florence](#), John of Montenegro, the champion of [Latin orthodoxy](#), found St. Thomas's works a source of irrefragable arguments. The "Decretum pro Armenis" (Instruction for the Armenians), issued by the authority of that [council](#), is taken almost verbatim from his treatise, "De fidei articulis et septem sacramentis" (see [Denzinger-Bannwart](#), n. 695). "In the Councils of [Lyons](#), [Vienne](#), [Florence](#), and the [Vatican](#)", writes [Leo XIII](#) (Encyclical "[Aeterni Patris](#)"), "one might almost say that Thomas took part in and presided over the deliberations and [decrees](#) of the Fathers contending against the [errors](#) of the [Greeks](#), of [heretics](#), and [Rationalists](#), with invincible force and with the happiest results."

But the chief and special [glory](#) of Thomas, one which he has shared with none of the [Catholic doctors](#), is that the Fathers of [Trent](#) made it part of the order of the [conclave](#) to lay upon the [altar](#), together with the code of [Sacred Scripture](#) and the [decrees](#) of the [Supreme Pontiffs](#), the [Summa](#) of Thomas Aquinas, whence to seek counsel, [reason](#), and inspiration. Greater influence than this no [man](#) could have.

Before this section is closed mention should be made of two books widely known and highly esteemed, which were inspired by and drawn from the writings of St. Thomas. The [Catechism of the Council of Trent](#), composed by [disciples](#) of the [Angelic Doctor](#), is in reality a compendium of his [theology](#), in convenient form for the use of [parish priests](#). [Dante's](#) "Divina Commedia" has been called "the [Summa](#) of St. Thomas in verse", and commentators trace the great Florentine poet's divisions and descriptions of the [virtues](#) and vices to the "[Secunda Secundae](#)".

## **Influence of St. Thomas (appreciation)**

### ***(1) In the Church***

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

[doctors](#), and the bright mirror of the [University of Paris](#)" ([Drane](#), op. cit., p. 431). In the old [Louvain University](#) the [doctors](#) were required to uncover and bow their heads when they pronounced the name of Thomas ([Goudin](#), op. cit., p. 21).

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

## (2) *Outside the Church*

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

(b) *Heretics and Schismatics* -- "A last triumph was reserved for this incomparable man — namely, to compel the homage, praise, and admiration of even the very enemies of the [Catholic](#) name" ([Leo XIII](#), *ibid.*). St. Thomas's [orthodoxy](#) drew upon him the [hatred](#) of all [Greeks](#) who were opposed to [union with Rome](#). The [united Greeks](#), however, admire St. Thomas and study his works (*see above* Translations of the "Summa"). The leaders of the [sixteenth-century revolt](#) [honoured](#) St. Thomas by attacking him, [Luther](#) being particularly [violent](#) in his coarse invectives against the great [doctor](#). Citing [Bucer's](#) wild boast, "Take away Thomas and I will destroy the [Church](#)", [Leo XIII](#) (*ibid.*) remarks, "The hope was vain, but the testimony has its value".

[Calo](#), [Tocco](#), and other biographers relate that St. Thomas, travelling from [Rome](#) to [Naples](#), [converted](#) two celebrated [Jewish rabbis](#), whom he met at the country house of Cardinal [Richard](#) ([Prümmer](#), op. cit., p. 33; [Vaughan](#), op. cit., I, p. 795). [Rabbi Paul of Burgos](#), in the

fifteenth century, was [converted](#) by reading the works of St. Thomas. Theobald Thamer, a disciple of [Melancthon](#), [abjured](#) his [heresy](#) after he had read the "[Summa](#)", which he intended to refute. The [Calvinist Duperron](#) was [converted](#) in the same way, subsequently becoming [Archbishop](#) of [Sens](#) and a [cardinal](#) (*see* Conway, O.P., op. cit., p. 96).

After the bitterness of the first period of [Protestantism](#) had passed away, [Protestants](#) saw the [necessity](#) of retaining many parts of [Catholic philosophy](#) and [theology](#), and those who came to [know](#) St. Thomas were compelled to admire him. Überweg says "He brought the [Scholastic philosophy](#) to its highest stage of development, by effecting the most perfect accommodation that was possible of the [Aristotelian philosophy](#) to [ecclesiastical orthodoxy](#)" (op. cit., p. 440). R. Seeberg in the "New Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia" (New York, 1911) devotes ten columns to St. Thomas, and says that "at all points he succeeded in upholding the [church doctrine](#) as credible and reasonable" (XI, p. 427).

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

## St. Thomas and modern thought

In the [Syllabus](#) of 1864 [Pius IX](#) condemned a proposition in which it was stated that the method and principles of the ancient [Scholastic doctors](#) were not suited to the needs of our times and the progress of [science](#) ([Denzinger-Bannwart](#), n. 1713).

In the [Encyclical "Aeterni Patris"](#) [Leo XIII](#) points out the benefits to be derived from "a practical reform of [philosophy](#) by restoring the renowned teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas". He exhorts the [bishops](#) to "restore the golden wisdom of Thomas and to spread it far and wide for the defence and beauty of the [Catholic Faith](#), for the [good](#) of [society](#), and for the advantage of all the [sciences](#)". In the pages of the [Encyclical](#) immediately preceding these words he explains why the teaching of St. Thomas would produce such most desirable results: St. Thomas is the great master to explain and defend the [Faith](#), for his is "the solid [doctrine](#) of the [Fathers](#) and the [Scholastics](#), who so clearly and forcibly demonstrate the firm foundations of the [Faith](#), its Divine origin, its [certain truth](#), the arguments that sustain it, the benefits it has conferred on the [human race](#), and its perfect accord with [reason](#), in a manner to satisfy completely [minds](#) open to persuasion, however unwilling and repugnant". The career of St. Thomas would in itself have justified [Leo XIII](#) in assuring [men](#) of the nineteenth century that the [Catholic Church](#) was not opposed to the right use of [reason](#). The [sociological](#) aspects of St. Thomas are also pointed out: "The teachings of Thomas on the [true](#) meaning of liberty, which at this [time](#) is running into license, on the Divine origin of all authority, on [laws](#) and their force, on the paternal and just rule of princes, on [obedience](#) to the highest powers, on mutual [charity](#) one towards another — on all of these and kindred subjects, have

very great and invincible force to overturn those principles of the new order which are well known to be dangerous to the peaceful order of things and to public safety" (ibid.).

The [evils](#) affecting modern [society](#) had been pointed out by the [pope](#) in the [Letter "Inscrutabili"](#) of 21 April, 1878, and in the one on [Socialism](#), [Communism](#), and [Nihilism](#) ("The Great Encyclicals of Leo XIII", pp. 9 sqq.; 22 sqq.). How the principles of the [Angelic Doctor](#) will furnish a remedy for these [evils](#) is explained here in a general way, more particularly in the [Letters](#) on the [Christian](#) constitution of states, human liberty, the chief [duties](#) of [Christians](#) as citizens, and on the [conditions of the working classes](#) (ibid., pp. 107, 135, 180, 208).

It is in relation to the [sciences](#) that some [persons](#) [doubt](#) the reliability of St. Thomas's writings; and the doubters are thinking of the physical and experimental [sciences](#), for in [metaphysics](#) the [Scholastics](#) are admitted to be masters. [Leo XIII](#) calls attention to the following [truths](#): (a) The [Scholastics](#) were not opposed to investigation. Holding as a principle in anthropology "that the human [intelligence](#) is only led to the [knowledge](#) of things without body and [matter](#) by things sensible, they well understood that nothing was of greater use to the [philosopher](#) than diligently to search into the mysteries of [nature](#), and to be earnest and constant in the study of physical things" (ibid., p. 55). This principle was reduced to practice: St. Thomas, [St. Albertus Magnus](#), [Roger Bacon](#), and others "gave large attention to the [knowledge](#) of natural things" (ibid., p. 56). (b) Investigation alone is not sufficient for [true science](#). "When facts have been established, it is [necessary](#) to rise and apply ourselves to the study of the [nature](#) of corporeal things, to inquire into the [laws](#) which govern them and the principles whence their order and varied unity and mutual attraction in diversity arise" (p. 55).

Will the [scientists](#) of today pretend to be better [reasoners](#) than St. Thomas, or more powerful in synthesis? It is the method and the principles of St. Thomas that [Leo XIII](#) recommends: "If anything is taken up with too great subtlety by the [Scholastic doctors](#), or too carelessly stated; if there be anything that ill agrees with the discoveries of a later age or, in a word, is improbable in any way, it does not enter into our [mind](#) to propose that for imitation to our age" (p. 56). Just as St. Thomas, in his day, saw a movement towards [Aristotle](#) and [philosophical](#) studies which could not be checked, but could be guided in the right direction and made to serve the cause of [truth](#), so also, [Leo XIII](#), seeing in the world of his time a spirit of study and investigation which might be productive of [evil](#) or of [good](#), had no desire to check it, but resolved to propose a moderator and master who could guide it in the paths of [truth](#).

No better guide could have been chosen than the clear-minded, [analytic](#), synthetic, and sympathetic Thomas Aquinas. His extraordinary patience and fairness in dealing with [erring philosophers](#), his approbation of all that was [true](#) in their writings, his gentleness in condemning what was [false](#), his clear-sightedness in pointing out the direction to [true knowledge](#) in all its branches, his aptness and accuracy in expressing the [truth](#) — these qualities mark him as a great master not only for the thirteenth century, but for all times. If any [persons](#) are inclined to consider him too subtle, it is because they do not [know](#) how clear, concise, and simple are his definitions and divisions. His two *summae* are masterpieces of pedagogy, and mark him as the greatest of human teachers. Moreover, he dealt with [errors](#) similar to many which go under the name of [philosophy](#) or [science](#) in our days. The [Rationalism](#) of [Abelard](#) and others called forth St. Thomas's luminous and everlasting principles on the [true](#) relations of [faith](#) and [reason](#). [Ontologism](#) was solidly refuted by St.

Thomas nearly six centuries before the days of [Malebranche](#), [Gioberti](#), and [Ubaghs](#) (*see* [Summa I:84:5](#)). The [true doctrine](#) on first principles and on [universals](#), given by him and by the other great [Scholastics](#), is the best refutation of [Kant's](#) criticism of [metaphysical ideas](#) (see, e.g., "Post. Analyt.", I, lect. xix; "De ente et essentia", c. iv; [Summa I:17:3 corp. and ad 2um](#); [I:79:3](#); [I:84:5](#); [I:84:6 corp and ad 1um](#); [I:85:2 ad 2um](#); [I:85:3 ad 1um, ad 4um](#); Cf. index to "Summa": "Veritas", "Principium", "Universale"). Modern [psychological Pantheism](#) does not differ substantially from the theory of one [soul](#) for all [men](#) asserted by [Averroes](#) (see "De unit. intell." and [Summa I:76:2](#); [I:79:5](#)). The [Modernistic error](#), which distinguishes the [Christ](#) of [faith](#) from the [Christ](#) of history, had as its forerunner the [Averroistic](#) principle that a thing might be [true](#) in [philosophy](#) and [false](#) in [religion](#).

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

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