

THE REVIVAL OF THOMISM AN HISTORICAL SURVEY

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This evening I wish to talk about the Thomistic revival which began in the nineteenth century and continues somewhat to the present day. The earlier period of this revival is already ripe for the historian's art; the later period is, of course, still too proximate for an accurate historical evaluation. The subject presents many fascinating problems, and it is of particular interest to us who are reaping the fruits of this revival. Unfortunately there is not sufficient time in the present curriculum of studies to examine significant developments in nineteenth century Catholic thought. A survey, such as I wish to give this evening, may help in some small way to outline what might be relatively unfamiliar ground.

Background

In order to understand the importance of the Thomistic revival under Pope Leo XIII, one must appreciate two significant facts concerning the development of Catholic thought since the Reformation. The first fact is that Catholic universities and seminaries were greatly influenced by "modern" philosophers, non-scholastic thinkers, many of whom were non-Catholic. The second fact is that many nineteenth century Catholic intellectuals had a sincere, ardent desire to defend Catholic doctrine against its adversaries and to render this doctrine acceptable in an age of rationalism, scepticism, naturalism and liberalism. This last fact produced what is called "nineteenth century apologetics."

Modern philosophical thought, even in Catholic circles, goes back to the

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French Catholic philosopher and scientist, René Descartes (1596-1650). Descartes was taught an unsatisfying form of scholasticism by the Jesuits at La Flèche. After discovering analytic geometry in 1619, Descartes wanted to reconstruct the whole of speculative philosophy, which at that time still included the natural sciences. Rejecting outright all previous thinkers, he elaborated a new philosophy, which he hoped would be acceptable to Catholic schools. To win over the theologians of his day, he dedicated a Latin exposition of his basic philosophical principles (*Meditationes de primis principiis*) to the Dean and Faculty of Theology of the Sorbonne in 1641.(1) The theologians were unimpressed. As might have been expected, some resented this innovation by a layman; others were antagonistic to the un-scholastic character of Descartes' philosophy.

Although spurned by the Sorbonne, Descartes' philosophy became widely popular after his death both in the vernacular and in the scholastic tongue. Not only was Cartesian philosophy taught in French, Belgian, Dutch and English universities,(2) but his principle of rejecting all previous, that is, pre-seventeenth century, thought became universal. Protestants welcomed the rejection of scholasticism, and even Catholics rejoiced in the downfall of Aristotelianism. Catholic colleges and seminaries in France, Belgium and Italy taught Cartesian philosophy or some form of it, as late as 1850, and it became customary to ridicule the Middle Ages, scholasticism, and the "peripatus" in books and lectures, even without bothering to explain what the "peripatus" was supposed to be.

Isaac Newton's definitive rejection of Cartesian physics (1713), Voltaire's popularization of Newtonian physics in France (1738), Clarke's Newtonian annotations to the standard Cartesian textbook, and the growing acceptance of universal gravitation and the new system of the world had their effect on seminary textbooks. Henceforth Newtonian physics was fitted into Cartesian metaphysics,(3) and the whole ensemble was adjusted to the schema of Christian Wolff's concept of philosophy.

Christian Wolff (1679-1754), a disciple of Leibniz, systematized his master's philosophy for use in schools. Wolff's fifteen volume course in philosophy was widely used in Germany, and highly influential in Italy, France, Spain and the low countries. The influence of Wolff can easily be recognized by the separation of experimental science from rational philosophy, the identification of philosophy with metaphysics and ethics, and the subdivision of metaphysics into ontology and special metaphysics.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth century countless Catholic textbooks were produced which presented a "Christian philosophy" based on the Scriptures, Descartes, Newton and Wolff. just to take two random examples, there was the standard textbook in Spanish seminaries during the first half of the nineteenth century written by Fr. Andrea de Guevara y Basoazabal, *Institutionum elementarium philosophiae*, in six volumes.(4) Here the latest theories and principles of physics were taught with Cartesian metaphysics and psychology. Gravitational forces attracting bodies at a distance, for example, were presented as highly conducive to theism and religion.(5) Then there was the anonymous *Institutiones philosophicae* which was published by authority of the Archbishop of Lyons for his own diocese (5 vols., Lyons 1788), but which was widely used in other dioceses as well. In the volume on metaphysics, the anonymous author copiously quotes from Sacred Scripture, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, Cicero, Seneca, Bossuet, Fénelon, French poets and contemporary philosophers, but St. Thomas is scarcely mentioned. Discussing the Molinist controversy, the author explains: "Thomistae sic dicti qui divum Thomam se ducem sequi gloriantur docent..."(6) Fortunately in this question the anonymous author sides with Bossuet and the Thomists against Molina and the Calvinists!

Catholic philosophy books in this period were frankly apologetical in character, venturing to defend the possibility of revelation, miracles, the Incarnation, the Eucharist, and other supernatural mysteries.

Historically speaking, it must be admitted that Catholic textbooks in philosophy produced during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century were very much "up to date" in the sense of being modern. The latest findings of modern science were incorporated; the Bible and post Cartesian philosophers were generously quoted, while Aristotle and scholastic philosophers were rarely mentioned, except in an historical survey. Thus modern science and modern philosophers were used to defend the ancient religion.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, a number of Catholic thinkers did not consider this endeavor modern enough. For our purpose it will be sufficient to consider only two of the most distinguished Catholic philosophers of the early nineteenth century, George Hermes and Anton Günther.(7)

George Hermes (1775-1831) was undoubtedly the most distinguished and the most influential Catholic thinker in Germany. His own study of Kant and Fichte at the University of Münster produced many religious doubts, but these Hermes put to one side temporarily until he could work out an over-all solution to the problem of religion. Eventually he worked out a new rationalist introduction to religion which "demonstrated" from within the Kantian system the truth of Catholicism. Since Kantianism was widely popular in Germany at the time, Hermes theological rationalism was enthusiastically received by many. His distinguished physical appearance, his extraordinary professorial ability, and his exemplary priestly life earned for him unusual respect and devotion in western Germany. Having received many academic honors from innumerable universities, even Lutheran universities, he was appointed "Rector Magnificus of the Catholic University of Bonn in the diocese of Cologne. During the 1820's all the leading professors of Bonn, Cologne, Breslau Münster, Braunsberg, Trier, countless cathedral chapters and smaller colleges were Hermesians. Even the Archbishop of Cologne, Baron von Spiegel, was an advocate of Hermes against the suspicions of Rome. The inevitable controversy became sharp and bitter between Hermesians and non-Hermesians. No action, however, was taken against

George Hennes, during his lifetime. After Hermes' death, Pope Gregor condemned the Hermesian system on 26 September 1835 as subversive of Catholic faith," and the major writings of George Hermes were placed on the Index.(8) The most stubborn Hermesians did not submit to the Church until 1860, twenty-five years after the condemnation. But the First Vatican Council found it necessary to express the traditional Catholic teaching more clearly because of him.(9) Out of priestly zeal for Church George Hermes had developed a Christian Kantian philosophy which claimed to demonstrate the necessity of supernatural mysteries.

More significant, in a way, was the philosophical system of Anton Günther (1783-1863), a Bohemian priest and writer who lived much of his life in Vienna. Günther's writings were directed primarily against the Pantheism of Hegel, whose influence in Germany was supplanting that of Kant. Rejecting scholasticism completely, Anton Günther elaborated a Christian Hegelianism to prove the transcendence of God, the Trinity of Persons (thesis-antithesis-synthesis), creation from nothing and the supernatural destiny of man. Although never a professor, this zealous and holy priest started a far-reaching movement which included some of the most distinguished Catholics of mid-nineteenth century Germany. At the zenith of this movement many of the outstanding Catholic professors of philosophy were Güntherians. Günther's Catholic Hegelianism was taught at Salzburg, Prague, Krems, Graz, Tübingen, Trier, Augsburg, Bonn, Breslau, and many other German universities. Günther himself was offered professorships at Munich, Bonn, Breslau and Tübingen, but he refused all of these in the hope of receiving an offer from the University of Vienna, which never came. He was a friend of St. Clement Mary Hofbauer, Cardinals Schwarzenberg and Diepenbrock, and many other eminent clerics. However, after much careful examination and amicable interrogation in Rome, the Holy Office decided to place the works of Günther on the Index on 8 January 1857. Pope Pius IX explained in a letter to the Archbishop of Cologne, Card. von Geissel, that Günther's handling of Christian dogmas was not consistent with the teaching of the Church, and the pontiff listed the reasons.(10) This came

as a terrible blow to Günther, who submitted. But the followers of Günther refused to submit. After the First Vatican Council most of the living Güntherians left the Church to join the Old Catholics.(11)

Here it is not necessary to add the better known attempts of the Abbé de Lammenais (12) and Padre Antonio Rosmini (13) to create a "new philosophy" in the name of apologetics and modernity.

All of these eminent and zealous priests were motivated by the highest Catholic ideals. But they did not have a solid enough philosophical foundation to save them from heretical and dangerous expressions of Catholic doctrine. What was needed was a sounder philosophy to apply to current problems. This sounder philosophy was soon seen by many to lie in the principles of St. Thomas.

Revival of Thomism in Italy

First it must be recognized that Thomism was always alive in the Dominican Order, small as it was after the ravages of the Reformation, the French Revolution, and the Napoleonic occupation. Repeated legislation of the General Chapters, beginning after the death of St. Thomas, as well as the Constitutions of the Order, required all Dominicans to teach the doctrine of St. Thomas both in philosophy and in theology. However, as early as 1748 the General Chapter meeting at Bologna felt that it was necessary to emphasize the ancient obligation,(14) In 1757 the Master General, John Thomas Boxadors, observed that some, not sufficiently versed in Thomistic doctrine, were proposing non-Thomistic novelties. He reviewed the Order's legislation and insisted that all return immediately to the solid teaching of the Angelic Doctor. This long letter was included in the acts of the General Chapter which met in Rome in 1777.(15)

That same year (1777) Salvatore Roselli, O.P., published a six volume *Summa philosophica*, which he dedicated to Boxadors, who had been created a Cardinal and allowed to remain Master General. In his dedication to Card. Boxadors, Roselli noted, "There are some men in the

Order, very few indeed, who, not knowing well the doctrine of St. Thomas, have dared to depart from it, and to embrace some other, novel opinions."(16) Roselli sincerely wanted to renew Thomism in the Order. Actually his influence extended beyond the Order, and everyone who had anything to do with the revival of Thomism in Italy, Spain and France was directly influenced by Roselli's monumental work. There were three editions of this work, (17) each of which was quickly exhausted. In 1837 a four volume compendium was published at Rome. The editor of this compendium remarked: "Although young philosophers accuse the Rosellian philosophy of extreme Aristotelianism, it is so highly esteemed that even though there have been many editions, scarcely or never at all can a copy of this work be found."(18)

For the beginnings of Italian Thomism outside the Dominican Order five men are generally singled out for their substantial contribution -- Canon Buzzetti, the two Sordi brothers who became Jesuits, the Jesuit Liberatore, and the diocesan priest Sanseverino.

Canon Vincenzo Buzzetti (1777-1824) of Piacenza was taught the philosophy of Locke and Condillac by the Vincentian Fathers of the Collegio Alberoni, but at the Collegio di San Pietro he did have one Spanish Jesuit teacher, Fr. Baltasar Masdeu, who occasionally lamented the abandonment of scholastic philosophy. Buzzetti discovered St. Thomas by reading the scholarly six volume work of Roselli and a smaller, simpler text by Antoine Goudin, O.P., which was first published in Milan in 1675. Buzzetti taught philosophy in the diocesan seminary at Piacenza from 1804 to 1808, during which time he wrote an unpublished *Institutiones logicae et metaphysicae "iuxta Divi Thomae atque Aristotelis inconcussa dogmata."*(19) This fundamentally Thomistic work suffers somewhat from the influence of Christian Wolff.(20) In 1808 Buzzetti was promoted to the chair of theology, and six years later he was appointed a Canon of the Cathedral. During a visit to Rome in 1818, Buzzetti revealed to the Holy Father his desire to enter the Society of Jesus, but Pope Pius VII discouraged the idea, saying that the 41 year old Canon was more valuable to the diocese of Piacenza. Among his

disciples were two Sordi brothers, who later became Jesuits, and Joseph Pecci, brother of the future Leo XIII.

Serafino Sordi (1793-1865), the brilliant younger brother, was the first to enter the Society of Jesus. In 1827 the General of the Society proposed that Sordi teach logic at the Roman College (Gregorianum), but Pavani, the Provincial, dissuaded the General from making such an appointment because "a strong opposition would rise among the professors of the Roman College ... so strong are the prejudices against Fr. Sordi because he is a Thomist."(21)

Describing the Roman College at this time (1827) where the future Leo XIII was then studying philosophy, Fr. Curci, who later founded *Civiltà Cattolica*, wrote in his memoirs:

I was deploring the Babylon to which the Roman College seemed to have been reduced. With regard to philosophy, everyone was free to teach what he liked best, provided he detested and ridiculed the so-called "Peripatus"; although nobody had never told us what the "Peripatus" was or what it pretended to be.(22)

Domenico Sordi (1790-1880) followed his younger brother into the Society of Jesus, but he was a hot-tempered individual who made many enemies. Among his disciples was Luigi Taparelli, S.J. When Taparelli became Provincial of the Naples Province, he wanted to secure Domenico Sordi for the Jesuit College in Naples. Taparelli wrote to Sordi saying that he had already managed to get into the college many copies of Goudin's work. Finally in 1831 Sordi began teaching philosophy in Naples. At the college Fr. Sordi formed a kind of "secret society," which met in his room to discuss the revival of scholasticism. Within two years rumors of this intellectual underground movement had reached Rome. In 1833 a Visitor General with full powers, Fr. Giuseppe Ferrari, came from Rome and dissolved the "revolutionary" clique. Fr. Sordi was deprived of all teaching and sent into pastoral work; Fr. Taparelli was discharged and sent to Palermo as teacher of French and music.

Matteo Liberatore (1810-1892) was appointed to succeed Domenico Sordi as professor of philosophy at the Naples College, because he had not belonged to Sordi's secret circle. Although Liberatore published his famous *Institutiones* at Naples in 1840, it was not until 1853 that he became convinced of Thomism. (23) By 1855 he was completely won over to the Thomist cause, largely through the influence of *Civiltà Cattolica*, which was founded in Naples in 1850 by Fr. Carlo Maria Curci, S.J., with editorial assistance from Fathers Taparelli and Liberatore.

The one most responsible for the revival of Thomism was perhaps Gaetano Sanseverino (1811-1865), a diocesan priest of Naples.(24) As a young man he was a convinced Cartesian, but around 1840 he seems to have been influenced by Roselli's book, and possibly by a visit from Domenico Sordi. In 1841 Sanseverino obtained the cooperation of Taparelli and Liberatore for his periodical *Scienza e Fede*, which systematically criticized current rationalism, idealism and liberalism. By 1849 Sanseverino had learned a great deal about St. Thomas and by 1853 he was a thoroughly convinced Thomist. In his renowned *Philosophia Christiana* of 1853 (5 vols.) Sanseverino wrote:

After many years of exclusive philosophical studies, I finally arrived at the conclusion that for a restoration of philosophy it was absolutely necessary to go back to the doctrine of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church.(25)

The importance of Sanseverino's work in the Thomistic revival was clearly recognized by the Dominican, Zeferino Gonzàles, who later became Cardinal. Ironically, Gonzàles criticized Sanseverino for being too Thomistic. Writing in 1865, the year of Sanseverino's death, Gonzàles noted two shortcomings in Sanseverino's *Philosophia Christiana*: first, it is too verbose, and second, "it is too narrowly attached to the philosophy that it defends; Sanseverino accepts St. Thomas' conclusions even in the minutest details, and despises modern thought as altogether vain and worthy of contempt."(26) Nevertheless,

Sanseverino contributed substantially to the revival of Thomism in Naples, and his work was continued by his disciple, Fr. Nunzio Signoriello, a diocesan priest.

For some reason, not yet clear to myself, the works of St. Thomas began to be published at Naples from 1845 onward. By 1850 the two great Summas, the *Catena aurea* and the *Sermons* were published in that city, after almost a century of universal neglect. Within the following decade, the *Summa theologiae* was also published at Parma, Bologna and Paris, where there also appeared two complete translations in French. The famous Parma edition was published by Fiaccadori between 1852 and 1873 in 25 folio volumes. Thereafter many editions were published in France and Italy.

The efforts of Sanseverino and Liberatore were brought to a head by Josef Kleutgen, S.J., Zeferino González, O.P., Tommaso Zigliara, O.P., and, of course, by Pope Leo XIII.

At the Provincial Synod of Spoleto in 1849, the Italian bishops, including the future Leo XIII, requested the papacy, among other things, to issue a point by point condemnation of current errors. This resulted in the famous *Syllabus of Errors*, issued by Pope Pius IX in 1864. These errors, all of them previously condemned, had been put forward mainly by Catholic apologists earlier in the century. Some historians think (27) that this list was drawn up by the Archbishop of Perugia, the future Pope Leo XIII. In any case, the Archbishop of Perugia, Joachim Pecci, promulgated a small-scale syllabus of his own in the form of a pastoral letter in 1867. The First Vatican Council (1869-70) was largely concerned with these very same errors. Clearly, the future Leo XIII was well aware of the serious errors promulgated by zealous, "modern" apologists, and he realized profoundly the importance of a sound Christian philosophy for the modern world.

The first encyclical issued by Pope Leo XIII concerned socialism and the general need of a sound Christian philosophy (*Quod apostolici*

muneris, 1878). This was followed by the famous *Aeterni Patris* of 4 August 1879, in which the Pope called for the restoration of St. Thomas' basic doctrine as the only sound Christian philosophy capable of answering modern needs. It has been claimed that the Holy See imposed Thomism on Catholics for some of its "manifest or concealed purposes,"(28) but this interpretation fails to appreciate the intrinsic value of St. Thomas' philosophy and the extrinsic fact that many Catholic thinkers in the 1870's had come to see in St. Thomas the hope of the future. It has been said (29) that the first draft of *Aeterni Patris* was written by the famous Jesuit, Josef Kleutgen, who, although a professor in Rome for forty years, had earined for himself a reputation in Germany as Thomas redivivus. But until more evidence is produced, we cannot discount the influence of Tommaso Zigliara, Regent of Studies at the Minerva, who was given the red hat that very year, put in charge of the Leonine edition of St. Thomas' works, appointed the first director of the Roman Academy of St. Thomas, founded by Leo XIII on 13 October of that year, and who drafted at least one other encyclical of Leo XIII.(30)

During the pontificate of Leo XIII the doctrines of St. Thomas were promulgated by the Holy See in every way possible. In his great encyclicals on social problems, government, human liberty, the religious question, Sacred Scripture, Catholic Action and education, Leo XIII employed the teaching of St. Thomas to solve modern problems. Outstanding Catholic scholars directed their ability to promulgating the philosophy and theology of the Angelic Doctor. Editions of his works multiplied, organizations were formed to promulgate his teaching, and Catholic institutes were founded in Italy, France, Belgium, Germany and the United States to foster and disseminate a Thomistic approach to modern problems.

The Modernist Crisis

After the death of Leo XIII in 1903, however, a younger generation of clerics felt that scholasticism was not "modern" enough. Particularly in

Italy and France a number of young clerics, devoid of a Thomistic formation, wished "to live in harmony with the spirit of the age." The desire to be "modern" stemmed mainly from the impact of German Higher Criticism on Catholic biblical scholars, historians and apologists. The Abbé Loisy of the Institute Catholique in Paris, perhaps the most distinguished of the so-called Modernists, summed up the situation: "The avowed modernists form a fairly definite group of thinking men united in the common desire to adapt Catholicism to the intellectual, moral and social needs of today."(31)

Actually Modernism was not a single body of doctrine; it had no founder; the name itself is unfortunate and ambiguous. Rather it was an intellectual movement simultaneously evoked in many countries of Europe by zealous clerics who wished to be up-to-date and non-isolationist in a world that was liberal, rationalist and evolutionistic. Modernists such as Loisy, Laberthonnière, Le Roy, Tyrell, Minocchi and Murri dealt mainly with the nature, source and promulgation of Catholic dogma. They insisted on the evolutionary, or developmental character of Catholic dogma and on modern man's ability to demonstrate these truths rationally and historically. There can be no doubt that the Modernists did not have the necessary philosophical and theological formation to deal with these difficult questions.

In 1905 and 1906 many Italian bishops warned against the "modernismo nel clero" in their pastoral letters. Toward the end of 1906 Abbate Cavallanti collected material which he published as *Modernismo e Modernisti*. On 6 May 1907 Pope Pius X issued a letter to archbishops, bishops and the Catholic Institute of Paris, urging in no uncertain terms that sacred studies and scholastic philosophy be restored, and that the training of the clergy be guarded most carefully. Two months later (3 July) the Holy Office published the decree *Lamentabili*, listing 65 Modernist errors taken mainly from the writings of Alfred Loisy.(32) This was followed (8 September) by the famous encyclical *Pascendi* of Pius X on the doctrine of the Modernists.(33) During the next three years there were at least ten important decrees, injunctions and letters from the Holy See, the Biblical Commission, the Holy Office, and other

authoritative sources on the question of Modernism and the proper training of the clergy.(34) By a Motu proprio of St. Pius X, issued on 1 September 1910, all candidates for higher orders, newly appointed confessors, preachers, parish priests, canons, the beneficed clergy, the bishop's staff, Lenten preachers, superiors and all professors in religious congregations were required to take an oath against Modernism, an obligation which is still binding.(35)

Many historians and theologians believe that the philosophical basis of Modernism was neo-Kantianism.(36) However, I suspect that it was more intimately connected with Hegelianism and the spirit of Anton Günther than with Kantianism and the spirit of George Hermes. Hegelianism, after all, in one form or another had already won the day in European philosophy. In any case, early twentieth century Modernism was linked in large measure with the new Catholic biblical movement, which was then feeling, the impact of Protestant Higher Criticism and Source Criticism.

The Modernist crisis between 1904 and 1914 was most unfortunate. It presented a great danger to the Church, which had to act quickly and forcefully, but it need not have happened if *Aeterni Patris* had been taken seriously in 1879. The Belgian biblical scholar Levie has noted:

As it developed after 1900 Modernism constituted for the Church a very great danger which could only be warded off by radical action, generally and speedily applied. The decree *Lamentabili* and the encyclical *Pascendi* were necessary and eminently salutary measures which cut down the evil at its roots. That certain special steps taken during what was in a sense a state of siege unfortunately affected some leading personalities who were above all suspicion cannot be denied, nor that a narrow and short-sighted society, organized by narrow-minded reactionaries for the purpose of delation to the Holy Office was at work for years.... But it remains true that the speed and firmness of the repression of Modernism by Pius X saved the Church and, as even the leading Modernists realized, entirely arrested the movement within the

Church.(37)

Pius X himself fully realized, as his own letters show, that a fundamental cause of Modernism was the failure to return to St. Thomas in the intellectual formation of the clergy. At least one modern scripture scholar has recognized that the "lack of theological and philosophical training was one of the causes of the eventual Modernism of several Catholic scripture scholars. of that time."(38) Pius X himself remarked concerning the Modernists: "idcirco philosophiam ac theologiam scholasticam derident passim atque contemnunt."(39)

St. Pius X was understandably upset by the various attempts to evade the decree of Leo XIII concerning Thomism. Many wished to teach an eclectic type of scholasticism, while many others made no attempt whatever to return either to St. Thomas or to scholasticism. In a Motu proprio of 29 June 1914 (Doctoris Angelici) St. Pius X explicitly stated that by scholasticism" is meant the "principal teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas." Lest there be any doubt about his meaning, Pius X said:

We desired that all teachers of philosophy and sacred theology should be warned that if they deviated so much as an iota from Aquinas, especially in metaphysics, they exposed themselves to grave risk.--We now go further and solemnly declare that those who in their interpretations misrepresent or affect to despise the principles and major theses of his philosophy are not only not following St. Thomas, but are even far astray from the saintly Doctor. If the doctrine of any writer or Saint has ever been approved by Us or Our Predecessors with such singular commendation and in such a way that to that commendation were added an invitation and order to propagate and defend it, it may easily be understood that it was commended to the extent that it agreed with the principles of Aquinas or was in no way opposed to them.(40)

Pius X went on to insist that all institutions granting pontifical degrees must use the Summa theologiae as a textbook in theology, and he declared that any such institution failing to comply with these directives within three years shall be deprived of all right to grant pontifical degrees.

One month later (29 July 1914) the Congregation of Studies clarified the meaning of "principal teachings of St. Thomas" by issuing a list of twenty-four fundamental theses in philosophy, twenty-three of which were denied by Francesco Suárez.(41) On 7 March 1916 the Congregation of Seminaries and Universities confirmed this list as essential, and insisted that the *Summa theologiae* be used as a textbook or at least as a major reference work for speculative theology.

This posed a problem of conscience for many Jesuits who could not accept the twenty-four theses. Therefore Fr. Włodimir Ledóchowski, General of the Society, submitted a letter, intended for the members of the Society, to Pope Benedict XV for his approval or revision on 18 January 1917. The letter emphasized the traditional place of St. Thomas in the Society as well as the mind of Leo XIII and Pius X.(42) As for the twenty-four theses, the letter argued that although the essentials of Thomism are found therein, one cannot be called un-Thomistic, if for grave reasons he thinks that one or other need not necessarily be defended. Therefore, the General concluded, the prescriptions of Pius X are "sufficiently satisfied, even though not all the theses are held, as long as they are proposed as safe directive norms."(43) This reasonable interpretation of the Church's mind was approved by Benedict XV on 19 March 1917.

The Code of Canon Law issued under Benedict XV (1917) required that all professors of philosophy and theology hold and teach the method, doctrine and principles of the Angelic Doctor (*ad Angelici Doctoris rationem, doctrinam et principia eaque sancte teneant.*) (44)

Pope Pius XI reiterated the mind of his predecessors in *Studiorum ducem*, issued on the sixth centenary of the canonization of St. Thomas (29 June 1923). In it he said:

We so heartily approve the magnificent tribute of praise bestowed upon this most divine genius that We consider that Thomas should be called

not only the Angelic, but also the Common or Universal Doctor of the Church, for the Church has adopted his philosophy for her very own, as innumerable documents of every kind testify.(45)

The Apostolic Constitution *Deus scientiarum dominus* (24 May, 1931) presented a detailed curriculum of studies for all seminaries, and this was imposed with the fullest apostolic authority.

The Modern Scene

Since 1934, however, there has been a movement in France, a kind of "theological underground," which rejects Thomism and scholasticism outright as wholly unsuitable for our day.(46) These French philosophers and theologians simultaneously insist on the importance of returning to the simplicity, sanctity and vitality of the early Fathers of the Church, and on the importance of creating a "new theology," a "new philosophy," and a "new cosmology" for our age based on the Hegelian experience of reality.

This *théologie nouvelle*, as it is called, is influenced mainly' by modern philosophies of evolutionism, historicism and existentialism coupled with a sincere desire to revitalize a world shaken by two World Wars and threatened by another. This new theology is more biblical, patristic and liturgical in approach than the sterile approach of modern scholasticism, such as is frequently taught in seminaries. As a philosophical preparation for this new theology, many French theologians claim that an Hegelian philosophical experience is the best means today of attaining a vital, meaningful theology. The point is that for them, scholasticism in general and Thomism in particular is too systematic, too essentialist and dry for a vital capable of moving modern man to spiritual heights. Aristotle may have been suitable for St. Thomas, but he is of no use today. Even St. Thomas, they maintain, cannot give modern man a vital experience of a living Christianity. Hegelianism, on the other hand, particularly as it was developed by Kierkegaard, Bergson, Marcel and Blondel, is concrete, existentialist and universal in its spiritual perception of the misery and the greatness of man in this world redeemed by Christ.

Many of these ideas were circulated in mimeograph form during and after the Second World War, particularly in the works of Henri Bouillard and Teilhard de Chardin. Garrigou-Lagrange, who has read many of these unpublished works, asserted that many of these articles contained "fantastic" opinions, ranging from apologetics and dogmatic theology to philosophy and extreme views on evolution.(47) The works of Teilhard de Chardin are recognized as pre-eminent examples of the "new cosmology". Henri De Lubac's *Surnaturel* of 1946 is generally considered a part of this movement, and many would consider the earlier views of Danielou and Msgr. de Solages as typical of the new theology.

The growing concern of Roman authorities, who had watched this movement for a long time, culminated in Pope Pius XII's theological masterpiece, *Humani generis*, of 12 August 1950. In it, Pope Pius XII not only condemned the fundamental errors of the *théologie nouvelle*, but he also emphasized the importance of returning to the doctrine of St. Thomas in our own day:

If one considers all this well, he will easily see why the Church demands that future priests be instructed in philosophy "according to the method, doctrine and principles of the Angelic Doctor," since, as we well know from the experience of centuries, the method of Aquinas is singularly pre-eminent both for teaching students and for bringing truth to light... How deplorable it is then that this philosophy, received and honored by the Church, is scorned by some who shamelessly call it outmoded in form and rationalistic, as they say, in its method of thought.(48)

Pope Pius XII also noted: "Unfortunately these advocates of novelty easily pass from despising scholastic theology to the neglect of and even contempt for the teaching authority of the Church itself, which gives such authoritative approval to scholastic theology."(49) This is one of the sad features of misguided zeal -- the zealot can easily alienate himself from the very source of his zeal. Fortunately, none of the so-called "new theologians" has cut himself from communion with the Church, and none wishes to do so.

The encyclical *Humani generis* fell like an unexpected bomb on French theologians, but it did not eliminate the movement, which in fact contains many commendable features. If anything, popular enthusiasm for the views of Teilhard de Chardin has increased by leaps and bounds since 1950. Because of this growing popularity, the Holy Office issued a *Monitum* last summer (30 June 1962) against the "ambiguities and even grave errors" contained in the writings of the late Father Teilhard de Chardin.⁽⁵⁰⁾ just six weeks ago, however, Professor Étienne Gilson wrote to me from Paris saying: "In Paris, Thomas went out of fashion. The theology-fiction of Teilhard de Chardin is the new fad. They are literally crazy about it."⁽⁵¹⁾ More and more French intellectuals are attracted to his sweeping evolutionistic vision which embraces cosmology, philosophy and a new theology. We in the United States have not yet begun to feel the real impact of this new cosmology, this new philosophy and this new theology, even though a number of Teilhard de Chardin's writings have appeared in English. Whether or not Americans respond as enthusiastically to the new theology as the French, remains to be seen.

In conclusion I would like to make three remarks. First, historically speaking, the program of Pope Leo XIII has never been universally implemented in Catholic colleges, universities and seminaries. Not even the ardent efforts of St. Pius X were able to effect this. Until this program is really attempted in a thorough manner, there will always be zealous priests who react to what they only half understand. Reactions against Thomism in the past half century have always been to a pseudo-Thomism, a half-understood St. Thomas.

Second, we must realize that many important things have been discovered in recent decades, and that many valuable insights have been re-captured by modern thinkers. One need, only consider the magnificent growth of history and the refinement of historical method, the extraordinary insights of psychology and psycho-analysis, the intriguing suggestions of demography, the fascinating discoveries of

archeology, philology, comparative religion, to say nothing of the discoveries of modern physics, genetics, anthropology and paleontology to realize what tremendous advances have been made in the past one-hundred years.

Within the past fifty years there has been a marvellous revival of biblical and patristic studies and the liturgical life. There has been a tremendous step forward in Christian charity indicated by the Ecumenical movements throughout the Western world. There is, in fact, a great religious revival moving ahead in our day.

None of this can be neglected by the modern Catholic leader.

Finally, according to the mind of the Church, only the sound philosophical and theological principles of St. Thomas are capable of creating a modern Catholic Weltanschauung which will move forward with the modern world and save it for Christ. *Ite ad Thomam* is not the cry of an antiquarian pope. It is the cry of a prophet who sees what can be the millenium of Christianity in the modern world. Therefore a great responsibility is ours. It is up to us Thomists and Catholics throughout the entire world to show that we can incorporate everything that is good and modern in our age -- and take the great step forward to tomorrow.

Notes

1 Descartes, *Oeuvres*, ed. C. Adam and P. Tannery (Paris: Vrin 1957), VII, 1-561.

2 The spread of Cartesian physics has been studied by Paul Mouy, *Le Développement de la Physique Cartésienne, 1646-1712* (Paris: Vrin 1934), pp. 1-217.

3 For the gradual undermining of Cartesian physics by Newtonianism, see George Sarton, "The Study of Early Scientific Textbooks," *Isis*, 38 (1947-8), 137-148, and Michael A. Hoskin, "Mining All Within: Clarke's Notes to Rohault's *Traité de Physique*," *Dignity of Science*, ed. James A. Weisheipl, O.P. (Washington: Thomist 1961), pp. 217-27.

4 On the editions and influence of this work, see the Spanish Enciclopedia (Barcelona, 1925), XXVII. 207a.

5 Andrea de Guevana v Basoazabal, *Institutionum elementarium philosophiae* (Valencia 1825), III, 154-5.

6 Anon., *Institutiones philosophicae: Metaphysica* (Lyons 1788), p. 308.

7 See J. Bellamy, *La théologie catholique au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Beauchene 1904) pp. 34-42, and the articles on "Hermes" and "Günther" in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York 1910).

8 Condemnation of the works of George Hermes from the brief *Dum acerbissimas* of 26 Sept. 1835 in *Denz.* 1618-21.

9 *Con. Vat. I, sess. III, cap. 3. De fide.* *Denz.* 1791, 1794, 1814-15.

10 Apostolic letter to Card. von Geissel, 15 June 1857, *Eximiam tuam.* *ASS*, 8 (1874), 445-8.

11 Friedrich Lauchert, art. "Günther" in *Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York 1910), VII, 87b.

12 Encyclical *Mirari vos arbitramur* of 15 Aug. 1832, *ASS* 4 (1868), 336-45; and *Singulari nos affecerant* of 25 June 1834, *Bullarii Ramani Continuatio*, XIX, 380b.

13 *Errores Antonii de Rosmini-Serbati*, *ASS*, 20 (1887), 398-410; cf.

ASS, 21 (1888), 709-10.

14 Acta Cap. Gen. Ord. Praed., IX, MOPH, XIV, 144.

15 Ibid., pp. 344-50: "Perlaturum ad nos rumore quodam primum, tum sermone aliquorum est, nonnullis nostrorum hominum inveniri, qui angelici magistri S. Thomae Aquinatis doctrinam non satis cognitam habentes atque adeo minoris facientes, quam pro summa eius praestantia ac dignitate deceat, ab ea discedere auderent, et opiniones aut plane novas aut certe a prisca perpetuaque Thomisticae institutionis ratione alienas sectati, eas probarent, iactarent, neque id solum, sed etiam auditoribus suis nonnunquam confidenter traderent."

16 S. M. Roselli, O.P., *Summa philosophica ad mentem Angelici Doctoris S. Thomae Aquinatis*, ed. 2a (Rome 1783), 1, vii. Roselli acknowledged that as early as the General Chapter of Bologna in 1748 Boxadors strove to restore the teaching of St. Thomas in the Dominican Order; see *ibid.*, pp. iii-iv and MOPH, XIV, 144.

17 Rome 1777; Rome 1783; Bologna by Antonio Borghi 1857-9 in 3 vols. The General Chapter of Rome in 1838 legislated: "Cum philosophiae studium ita sit a iuvenibus nostris instituendum, ut viam sternat ad divi Thomae doctrinam rite percipiendam faciliusque addiscendam, statuimus ut ad triennium philosophicis institutionibus Patris Roselli, ordinis nostri, studere atque edoceri debent; in physica tamen aliquo neotetico uti possint auctore." MOPH, XIV, 400. Concerning this last statement, it should be noted that Dominicans, at least in the Roman and Naples provinces, chose to use "provvisoriamente" a Jesuit textbook for physics toward the end of the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth century. This was the *Logicae et metaphysicae institutiones* of Sigismund Storchenau, S.J. (1731-1797). Storchenau's physics was more in keeping with the mechanistic physics of the eighteenth century, and it was attacked many times in Roselli's *Summa*. Nevertheless it was used in the Roman and Neapolitan studia of the Order for about fifty years. Registro o Bacchetta della

Provincia Regni 1800, folio: Febbraio 1829 (Arch. di Prov. dei PP Domenicani S. Domenico Maggiore, Naples). See V. Nardini, O.P., "Sul gabinetto fisico della Minerva," *Memorie Domenicane*, 1902, p. 202; Ignazio Narciso, O.P., "Il movimento neotomista," *Sapienza*, 14 (1961), 444 and fn. 15.

18 *Compendium summae philosophicae R. F. Salvatoris Mariae Roselli*, O.P. ed anon. (Rome: Collegio Urbano 1837), p. iii. A Roman correspondent for *Année Dominicaine* wrote in 1857: "Goudin ou Roselli sont les auteurs que les étudiants ont entre les mains en Italie" (pp. 489-90). Nevertheless this same correspondent noted: "La philosophie de ce dernier [Roselli] est rare en Italie, il faut la faire venir d'Espagne, Une nouvelle édition en a été entreprise à Bologne; mais jusqu'à présent un seul volume a paru [Bologna 1857]. "Études de saint Thomas à Rome," *Année Dominicaine*, 1 (1860), 489, fn. 2. The second volume of this third edition of Roselli's work appeared in 1858, and the third appeared in 1859.

19 See Paolo Dezza, S.J., *Alle Origini del Neotomismo* (Milan: Bocca 1940), pp. 16-18. The first part of Buzzetti's work was published by Msgr. A. Masnovo as *Institutiones philosophicae. I: Logica et metaphysica* (Piacenza 1940). Fr. Dezza and others have noted the influences of Goudin's work, *Philosophia iuxta inconcussa tutissimaque D. Thomae dogmata*. Goudin's little work was first published at Milan in 1675, and by 1744 it had gone through fourteen editions; in 1851 RouxLavergne, a diocesan priest of Redez, revised and published the work at Paris, the fourth edition of which came out in 1886.

20 Logic and general metaphysics were followed by psychology, cosmology and ethics. Natural theology apparently was not taught as a part of philosophy.

21 Letter of 2 October 1827, quoted by Dezza, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

22 *Memorie del P. Curci* (Florence 1891), quoted by Ignazio Narciso,

O.P., loc. cit., p. 457.

23 Msgr. Masnovo has shown that Liberatore was in no way a Thomist before 1850, but rather an eclectic, influenced mainly by Victor Cousin. A. Masnovo *Il Neotomismo in Italia* (Milan 1923), pp. 30-38. Cf. Bernardino M. Bonansea' "Nineteenth-Century Scholastic Revival in Italy," *New Scholasticism*, 28 (1954) 4-9 and 25-27.

24 This view, though not shared by all, is shared by many. "The direct initiator of the neo-scholastic movement in Italy was Cajetan Sanseverino." J. L. Perrier, *The Revival of Scholastic Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century* (New York 1909), p. 158.

25 G. Sanseverino, *Philosophia Christiana cum antiqua et nova comparata* (Naples 1853). The chronology of Sanseverino's development is stated in his own words: "Has Institutiones quas anno 1851 evulgare incepimus, haud continuavimus, quia cum tertiam partem scriberemus, ad philosophiam scholasticam omnino redundum nobis esse amniadvertimus; unde Philosophiae Christianae, cuius iam sex volumina edita sunt, concinnande manum admovimus." *Elementa*, ed. 2a, (Naples 1873), 1, 517, fn.

26 Z. González, *Philosophia elementaria*, ed. 7a (Madrid 1874), pp. 383-4.

27 For example, J. B. Bury, *History of the Papacy in the Nineteenth Century, 1864-1878* (London: Macmillan 1930), p. 2; W. Lorenz, "Die Jugend Leos XIII," *Stimmen der Zeit*, 165 (1959), 422-3.

28 G. Saitta, *Le Origini del Neotomismo nel Secolo XIX* (Bari 1912), p. 213.

29 Art. "Kleutgen" in *Enciclopedia Cattolica*, VII, 716.

30 Isnardo Pio Grossi, O.P., "Il Card. Tommaso M. Zigliara, O.P., e la

preparazione della *Rerum Novarum*," *Memorie Domenicane*, 37 (1961), 86-100; "Il Card. Tommaso M. Zigliara, O.P., redattore della *Rerum Novarum*," *Vita Sociale*, 1961 (Luglio-ottobre), estratto.

31 A. Loisy, *Simple réflexions*, p. 13, quoted by Vermeersch, art. "Modernism," in *Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York 1911), X, 416a.

32 Decree *Lamentabili*, ASS, 40 (1907), 470-78.

33 Encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis*, ASS, 40 (1907), 593-650. The author of the first draft of this encyclical apparently was Fr. Joseph Lenius, O.M.I. (1860-1923), a Frenchman, Procurator General of the Oblates in Rome, consultor of several Roman Congregations, and later qualificator of the Holy Office. See Canon Rivière, "Qui rédigea l'encyclique *Pascendi*?" *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique* of Toulouse (April-September 1946).

34 Cf. A. Vermeersch, *De modernismo tractatus et notae canonicae cum Actis S. Sedis a 17 April 1907 od 25 Sept. 1910* (Bruges 1910); also his art. "Modernism" in *Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York 1911), X, 420-21.

35 *Motu proprio* of Pius X, A . SS, 2 (1910), 655-80; the oath against Modernism is given on pp. 669-72. C.I.C., can. 1406.

36 A. Vermeersch, loc. cit., X, 418b.

37 Jean Levie, *The Bible, Word of God in Words of Men* (New York: Kenedy 1961.), pp. 72-73.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 52.

39 *Encycl. Pascendi*, loc. cit., p. 636.

40 Encyclical *Doctoris Angelici*, AAS, 6 (1914), 336-7.

41 The list of theses was published in AAS, 6 (1914), 383-6. Cf. AAS, 8 (1916), 156-7; 23 (1931), 253-68. For a comparison with the teaching of Francesco Suárez, see L. G. Alonso Getino, "El Centenario de Suárez," *La Ciencia Tomista*, 15 (1917), 384-8.

42 *Epistola Wlodimiri Ledóchowski de doctrina S. Thomae magis magisque in Societate fovenda*. ZKTh, 42 (1918), 207-236. See Vincente Beltran de Heredia, O.P., "La enseñanza de Santo Tomás en la Compañía de Jesús, durante el primer siglo de su existencia," *La Ciencia Tomista*, 11 (1915), 388-408; 12 (1915), 34-48.

43 Letter of W. Ledóchowski, loc. cit., p. 234.

44 C.I.C., can. 1366, §2.

45 Encyclical *Studiorum ducem*, AAS, 15 (1923), 314.

46 See James M. Connolly, *The Voices of France* (New York: Macmillan 1961), pp. 176-190.

47 R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., "La nouvelle théologie, où va-t-elle?" *Angelicum*, 23 (1946), 126-45.

48 Encyclical *Humani generis*, AAS, 42 (1950), 573.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 567.

50 Monitum of the Holy Office (30 June 1962): "satis patet praefata opera [Patris Petri Teilhard de Chardin] talibus scatere ambiguitatibus, immo etiam gravibus erroribus, ut catholicam doctrinam offendant." AAS, 54 (1962), 526.

51 Personal communication from È. Gilson, dated from Paris, 15 October 1962.

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