

order, was called upon to champion the cause of morality and truth, and to overthrow the advocates of disorder and error. It was, indeed, a wise dispensation of Providence, that placed him in the midst of those errors, while they were yet in their bud and were threatening to spread themselves and to cause the upheaval of all social order. He came with his splendid attainments, his profound insight into questions of a most subtle nature, his keen judgment and wonderful powers of argumentation, and irrevocably destroyed these questions pregnant with dangers to society and bearing on their face the stamp of irreligion and ultimate infidelity.

St. Thomas was a man endowed in a most perfect manner with all the higher and more ennobling qualities of our nature. Intellectually a giant, he blended in one most perfect whole the honesty and precision of Socrates, the keenness of Aristotle and the desire for knowledge which marked particularly the labors of Plato. The *Summa* of St. Thomas is surely a work which is not the outcome of man's unaided efforts, for the natural talent of the greatest intellect would be inadequate to the composition of such a masterpiece. It required a soul bathed in the waves of supernatural light and strengthened by something more powerful than the strongest flame of the human intellect. In a word, we must necessarily say that St. Thomas, who died at the early age of 49 years, could not have given to the world all the magnificent labors of his mind without a special grace of Heaven. Inspiration it was that did more than genius in bringing about these splendid results.

Let us gaze for a moment upon what are the practical results of St. Thomas' labors in our own times. Cast our eyes about and what do we see? Faith and religion unheeded, the doctrines of Christ reviled, morals insulted, and the Catholic Church but an object of scorn to contemptuous pedants. With all the wondrous order and regularity of the universe, with all the beautiful sights that nature presents to our view, men say there is no God. They pretend to see not in the constellations of Heaven the stamp of

supernatural labor. What their object may be it is difficult to say. I care not how depraved a man may be, how low he may have fallen into the mire of sin, he cannot cast his eyes about him and supported by stern convictions, say "There is no God." Such men there are, however, whether they be pantheists, atheists, naturalists, positivists, or emanatists, their creed is a denial of the Supreme Being, their doctrine, the blasphemy of the Most High. Where can we find a refutation for their false arguments? We have but to turn the pages of St. Thomas' philosophy there to find an answer to their sophistries. The existence of a God, as St. Thomas explains, can be proved only *a posteriori*, or by going from effect to cause. Experience teaches us that there exists in the world a series of causes and effects. This granted, either everything is cause and effect, or there exists a being who is cause without being effect. The first supposition is repugnant, as it would be necessary to suppose a being who is at the same time cause and effect, which is absurd. Therefore, there must be a first cause, which is not effect; that cause is God. Again, by considering necessary and contingent beings, St. Thomas teaches us how to arrive at a knowledge of God. The possible supposes the necessary, for were there a time when all was simply possible, nothing would exist, consequently nothing could have been produced. Then since something does exist, there exists also a being who is not only possible, but necessary, namely, God. St. Thomas demonstrates this great truth properly, in five different ways. He reasons thus: 1st, Every movement supposes an immovable principle; 2nd, Every series of effects supposes a first cause; 3rd, The possible supposes the necessary; 4th, The relative supposes the absolute; 5th, Order supposes intelligence. Have we not, in these considerations of St. Thomas, powerful weapons to overthrow the false and immoral reasoning of those who deny God's existence? Not only is it upon this question, but upon any of the errors of modern times, we have only to refer to St. Thomas to successfully baffle these puerile sophistries.