

sinfulness and weakness of human nature, he divided the two offices of the king and the priest. The king would look after the worldly welfare of the people, the priest spiritual welfare. The two are independent authorities, yet dependent, on each other. The king must recognise the church's authority over the spiritual affairs of men, the priest must recognise the king's authority over their spiritual affairs. He advocated cooperation between the church and the state which never happened.

NOTES

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. When did the first real controversy between the church and the state begin?
2. Which philosophies did St. Augustine's ideas reflect?
3. What was the biggest achievement of St. Augustine's philosophy?
4. What is the role of the state, according to St. Augustine?
5. Who formulated the theory of two swords?

2.3 ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

The only figure of real philosophical significance in the Middle Age was St. Thomas Aquinas. His body of work gave a complete picture of the medieval thoughts. Born in 1227 at Rocca Sicca near Naples in an aristocratic family, he joined the mendicant order of the Dominicans when he was sixteen.

St. Aquinas became a well-known name during the religious and intellectual movement of the 13th century. In order to understand Thomism, the scholasticism of the 13th century has to be understood first. Scholasticism was, in fact, the logical interpretation of religious dogmas. Its purpose was to bring reason to the support of faith and to strengthen the religious life and the church by the development of intellectual power. It aimed at silencing all doubts and questionings about the church through argumentations. Its chief characteristics were two, namely, the church dogma was infallible and unquestionable and dogma was not contrary to reason. Its rational element was furnished by the philosophy of the ancients and the theological element by the church pristes.

2.3.1 Views on Church and the State

St. Thomas Aquinas defined the state as an author who executed the perception of human law. Law is the basic command of the church and that command may be the punishment of vice and source of encouragement for future history. The church, according to Aquinas, is the presenter as well as the interpreter of divine law. In doing so, the church uses natural law, and human law is an inferior part of it. The church aids the state in delivering its responsibilities by advising it on moral legislation. It is thus, that one may see him as the pre-eminent guardian of the Catholic Church, playing a significant role in furthering its glory. He is credited with solving the apparent

dualism between the two orders of sovereignty—*temporal* and *spiritual*—which was intolerable to the medieval philosophical mind. It is his successful reconciliation of reason and faith which has rendered his authority as timeless.

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Given its due significance, Aquinas' works still form the intellectual backbone of all subsequent Catholicism. One pivotal change which resulted from Aquinas' writings was the abandonment by Roman Catholics of the theory that religion, acting through the machinery of the state, should dominate science and philosophy. A similar change was witnessed in the political arena, which saw a gradual weakening of papal claims to appoint and depose kings and the substitution of nationalist sentiment for ecclesiastical authority as the dominating force behind government. Given these considerations, one can gauge the seminal contributions Aquinas made to the evolution of the modern nation-state laid on a secular foundation.

Justification of the State and Political Obligation

If political institutions are seen as an aspect of 'natural' morality, this implicitly suggests that the justification of the state and the ground of political obligation has to be seen grounded in the very nature of man. Aquinas derived this pivotal idea from Aristotle. Among often repeated expressions, every time St. Thomas approaches the problem of politics, is: *homo naturaliter est animal politicum et sociale* (ut philosophus dicit, ut probatur in politicis, etc.).

The cited words are important. William of Moerbeke, whose Latin translation of *Politics* was the source of St. Aquinas' knowledge of Aristotle's work, had translated the Aristotelian expression. Aquinas maintained this expression in his *Commentary on Aristotle's Politics*, but he constantly used animal *politicum et sociale* in all his other works. The important issue here is not so much to do with whether these expressions are a more correct rendering of Aristotle's thought, but rather has to do with the emphasis which is laid upon the social character of politics. Man is a political animal since he is a social being. This means that while the state is to be seen rooted in social experience, it cannot be solely the creation of human will. The state is, then, to be seen not as a work of art, but a historical product signifying the highest expression of human fellowship.

All that renders it possible is open to rational enquiry. Aquinas never tires of emphasizing the importance of the political nature of man. At one place, he describes man as being subject to a triple order comprising divine law, reason, and political authority. If man had been, by nature, a solitary animal, then the order of reason and that of revealed law would have sufficed. However, since man is a political being it is required that, if he is to achieve his proper end and the highest forms of life and virtue, he should share in political life and practice the virtues of politics.

Doctrine of the Political Nature of Man

The doctrine of the political nature of man has an immediate significance for the treatment of political obligation. The implication here is that the historical origins of the state must not be confused with the problem of its rational justification. A political relationship, irrespective of the earliest conditions of mankind, is its natural condition.