

“...the development of our mind, the human word, by contact direct or indirect with the Spirit and the Divine Word – that serious study and persevering practice will give you entry into the wondrous sanctuary. You will be of those who grow, who enrich themselves, and who make ready to receive magnificent gifts.” 12

“More than ever before thought is waiting for men, and men for thought. The world is in danger for lack of life-giving maxims.” 15

“Every truth is life, direction, a way leading to the end of man.” 13

“The true springs up in the same soil as the good: their roots communicate. Broken from the common root and therefore less in contact with the soil, one or other suffers; the soul grows anemic or the mind wilts. On the contrary, by feeding the mind on truth one enlightens the conscience, by fostering good one guides knowledge.” 19

“...passions and vices relax attention, scatter it, lead it astray; and they injure the judgment in roundabout ways...” 21

“Study carried to such a point that we give up prayer...is an abuse and a fool’s game”. 29

“...for the fully awakened soul, every truth is a meeting place; the sovereign Thought invites ours to the sublime meeting” 31

“Retirement is the laboratory of the spirit; interior solitude and silence are its two wings.” 48

“In order to know humanity and to serve it, we must enter into ourselves, where all the objects we pursue are together in contact, and get from us either our strength of truth or our power of love.” 52

“...the intellectual workshop or consortium...friends thus gathered together would, so to say, multiply one another, and their common soul would reveal a wealth of which no sufficient explanation would appear to be discoverable in any single part.” 55

“Friendship is an obstetric art; it draws out our richest and deepest resources; it unfolds the wings of our dreams...it keeps up our ardor, and inflames our enthusiasm.” 56 It is not just ‘being alone,’ but the “...a higher kind of solitude, which feeds and tones up the soul instead of depressing and weakening it.” 68

“As prayer can last all the time, because it is desire and the desire is constant, why should not study last all the time, seeing that it also is desire and an invocation of the true? The desire of knowledge defines our intelligence as a vital force.” 70

“...it is the thinker’s special characteristic to be obsessed by the desire for knowledge: why not keep this desire at work, constantly at work like a stream beneath which turbines have been installed?” 71

“If we looked at everything with an inspired spirit, we should find lessons everywhere...” 73

“If you cannot look thus, you will become, or be, a man of only commonplace mind. A thinker is like a filter, in which truths as they pass through leave their best substance behind.” 74

“Our mind has the faculty of functioning of itself if we prepare its operation ever so little, and lightly trace the outline of the channels in which its mysterious currents will flow.” 79

“Complete treatises have thus grown fully clear, after a long and laborious series of complicated studies during which the author felt as if he were lost in a wood with no open space or vista ahead anywhere. Inventions have come about like that. Elements scattered in the mind, old experiments or bits of information of no apparent interest have converged, and problems have been solved of themselves ...” 84

“...one can also sow the seed of one’s work in the field of night.” 86

“The time of a thinker, when he really uses it, is in reality charity to all; only thus do we appreciate it properly.” 99

“Comparative study: by that we mean widening our special work through bringing it into touch with all kindred disciplines, and then linking these specialities and the whole group of them to generate philosophy and theology.” 102.

“A mind in love with the spectacle of truth, outspread and shining with its light like the rainbow spanning heaven, grows capable of taking in without fatigue and with delight knowledge that would weary the man drearily confined to a single speciality.” 106

“Just as no particular branch of knowledge is self-sufficing so all branches together are not self-sufficing without the queen of knowledge, philosophy, nor the whole of human knowledge without the wisdom springing from the divine science itself, theology.” 107

“...every man who thinks and really desires to *know* can ...introduce order into his knowledge by an appeal to the principles of order; in a word, by philosophizing, and by crowning his philosophy with a concise but profound theology.” 109

Thomism is an ideal “body of directive ideas forming a whole and capable, like the magnet, of attracting and subordinating to itself all our knowledge... a synthesis...a complete system of knowledge can find in it an almost miraculous power to coordinate and uplift.” 115

“the encyclopedic mind is an enemy of knowledge. True knowledge...lies in depth rather than in superficial extent.” 118

“Our soul does not age; it is always growing; in regard of truth it is always a child...” 123

“The enemy of knowledge is our indolence; that native sloth which shrinks from effort...regarding a vigorous and sustained impetus as a regular martyrdom.” 124

“Infinity, lying before us, demands infinity in our desire...” 127

“...there is something else still more important, namely, to submit not only to the discipline of work, but to the discipline of truth. This submission to truth is the binding condition for communion with it.” 130

“Yielding ourselves up to truth, and formulating it for ourselves as best we can...we perform an act of worship...” 131

“Profound work consists in this: to let the truth sink into one, to be quietly submerged by it, to lose oneself in it, not to think that one is thinking, nor that one exists, nor that anything in the world exists but truth itself. That is the blessed state of ecstasy.” 133

“...reading is the universal means of learning, and it is the proximate or remote preparation for every kind of production. We never think entirely alone: we think in company, in a vast collaboration; we work with the workers of the past and of the present.” 145

“The mind is dulled, not fed, by inordinate reading, it is made gradually incapable of reflection and concentration, and therefore of production; it grows inwardly extroverted...becomes the slave of its mental images, of the ebb and flow of ideas on which it has eagerly fastened its attention. This uncontrolled delight is an escape from self; it ousts the intelligence from its function and allows it merely to follow point for point the thoughts of others...” 147

“...four kinds of reading. One reads for one’s formation ...one reads in view of a particular task; one reads to acquire a habit of work and the love of what is good; one reads for relaxation. There is *fundamental* reading, *accidental* reading, *stimulating* or *edifying* reading, *recreative* reading. ...Fundamental reading demands docility, accidental reading demands mental mastery, stimulating reading demands earnestness, recreative reading demands liberty.” 152

“Contact with genius is one of the choice graces that God grants to humble thinkers...We think too little of the privilege of this bond with the greatest minds. It multiplies the joy and profit of living, it enlarges the world and makes it a nobler and more precious place to live in, it renews for each man the glory of being a man...” 157

“The communion of saints is the support of the mystical life; the banquet of the sages...is the invigoration of our intellectual life. To cultivate the faculty of admiration and because of it to keep constantly in familiar touch with illustrious thinkers, is the means, not of equaling those whom we honor, but of equaling our own best self...” 158

“The man who wants to acquire from his authors, not fighting qualities, but truth and penetration, must bring to them this spirit of conciliation and diligent harvesting, the spirit of the bee.” 165

“...the reader...is called on...to react to what he reads so as to make it his own and by means of it to form his soul.” 166

“A man who is always listening may never learn, unless he changes into his own substance what he has heard in his docile intercourse with others. Docility is praiseworthy and necessary; it is not enough.” 167

“No one can teach us without our own effort.” 167

“...my reading must enable me to engender thought in the likeness, not of the author who inspires me, but of myself!” 172

“Engrave on your mind whatever can help you to conceive or carry out a project, whatever your soul can assimilate, whatever can serve your purpose, vivify your inspiration, and sustain your work. As for the rest, consign it to oblivion.” 175

“Fully to understand a thing, then to learn and to introduce into one’s mind not fragments, not loose links but a chain, is to make sure of the sticking quality of the whole. Union is strength.” 183

“When you write, you must publish, as soon as good judges think you capable of it and you yourself feel some aptitude for that flight.” 200

“If you produce nothing you get a habit of passivity; timidity grows continually and the fear caused by pride; you hesitate, waste your powers in waiting, become as unproductive as a knotted tree-bud.” 201

“If you want fully to exist from the intellectual point of view, you must know how to think aloud, to think explicitly, that is to shape both within you and for the outside world the word which is the expression of your mind.” 201

“The secret of writing is to stand and study things ardently, until they speak to you and themselves determine their own expression.” 203

“The mind gets into the way of doing what is often demanded of it.” 221

“Keep your soul free. What matters most in life is not knowledge, but character Study must be an act of life, must serve life, must feel itself impregnated with life.” 235

“We must widen our work...in order not to be like the chained galley slave, or to turn intellectuality into an instrument of torture. Work is a free act.” 240

“Secure yourself some leisure; do not exhaust yourself; work in tranquility and in spiritual joy; be free.” 247

“Work maintains the balance of the soul; it brings about interior unity...the expenditure of our powers in an orderly rhythm tones them up and regularizes them, giving them something of the spirit of the boat’s crew which sings while rowing.” 250

“...sanctity and intellectuality are of the same essence. Indeed, truth is the holiness of the mind; it preserves it; as holiness is the truth of life and tends to fortify it for this world and for the next. There is no virtue without growth, without fruitfulness, without joy; neither is there any intellectual light that does not produce these effects.” 256