

c. Verbal (snappy) summary of Papal Enactments

4. The Scholastic Movement (this is a term used to designate the period in world history when a rebirth of scholarship occurred with a new interest in the older classical works and a resurgence in academic interest took place)

a. The search for reality

Scholasticism offered a re-interest in philosophy and philosophical theology. It had its roots in the older palace schools of Alcuin and Erigena and its earlier expression with Anselm (d. 1109). In effect it died about 1400 but the influence it gave to renaissance humanism and the early moves of the reformers was considerable.

The heart of the scholastic question was in the area of reality. People on the whole lived miserable lives and there seemed no eminent relief from their repression and suffering. The minds of thinkers went to the question of What is reality? Whether one thinks of reality in the physical or spiritual world makes little difference. To the philosophers it is one question. Could reality be the miserable life of the average serf? Was it the self-denying life of the monastic? Was it the gluttonous and often bloody life of the ruling lords? Before you answer too quickly, note that the scholastics never solved the earthy side of the matter but their answers did offer interpretative help to those who live through it all. The answers to the perplexing question came in three categories:

(1) Realists...following a generally platonic line they thought that universals existed before individual objects. Nothing you have is real...it emanates some of the qualities of reality...but it is just a thing. The real is ethereal and you can be just as well off as you think to be.

(2) Modified Realists taught that the universals only exist in connexion with the object applied. The universals take their definition from the parts and the more parts you have...the more likely you will know what the universal is.

(3) Nominalists held that universals only existed in thought and were resemblance names for abstractions. In this regard one can see ideas not unlike the stoics and their concept of reason and life in an earlier age.

In spite of some very good points, scholasticism tended to take away from Biblical authority as we will note in figure c.