THERE IS NO SUCH *FINIS ULTIMUS*

LIBERAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS CONSIDERED

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In this paper, I will describe the philosophical anthropology presupposed by the liberal tradition and demonstrate how that anthropology influences liberal conceptions of the relationship between Church and state. My analysis will draw from the works of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and John Rawls. I will also offer a critique of liberal anthropology and an alternative view of the relationship between Church and state based on the Thomistic tradition of Aquinas and Pope Leo XIII.

Despite the diversity and variety of the liberal tradition, the three liberal thinkers mentioned above are united by common threads. One such thread is that all three of them are social contract theorists. Hobbes' *Leviathan* and Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* are explicitly social contract works. Rawls' system, outlined in *A Theory of Justice* and *Justice as Fairness*, is slightly different, involving not a contract that charters a government but an agreement on certain principles adopted by citizens in a hypothetical "original position" characterized by being

under a "veil of ignorance."[1] Rawls states that his theory "generalizes the familiar idea of the social contract," but modifies it by "making the object of agreement the first principles of justice… rather than a particular form of government."[2] Thus, despite his modifications, Rawls identifies himself with the social contract tradition of Hobbes and Locke and clarifies that his system shares its basic structure.

However, the most significant commonality between the liberal thinkers is the philosophical anthropology they share and presuppose in their political theories. Here, there is distinct congruence between all three authors: despite the various conclusions they draw about the ideal system of government and how to structure it, they all hold a common understanding of human nature and the human person. This liberal anthropology views man as having no determinate good toward which he is naturally inclined but instead as defining his own conception of the good and being primarily governed by the passions.

This view of man results from the liberal rejection or bracketing of teleology. In Hobbes' *Leviathan* for example, he explicitly rejects the teleological notion of man having a highest end or good to which he is compelled by nature. He states:

> [W]e are to consider that the felicity of this life consisteth not in the repose of a mind satisfied. For there is no such *Finis ultimus* (utmost aim) nor *Summum Bonum* (greatest good) as is spoken of in the books of the old moral philosophers.[3]

Here, Hobbes asserts that man has no end or good to which he is inclined. Instead, Hobbes argues that man's happiness is driven by "a continual progress of the desire, from one object to another, the attaining of the former being still but the way to the latter."[4] It is continual because "the object of man's desire is not to enjoy once only, and for one instant of time, but to assure forever the way of his future desire."[5] Importantly, Hobbes leaves the object of man's desires undefined because he believes that man's desires are simply whatever he is inclined to at any particular moment. Thus, man has no ultimate good that he desires, which leaves

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1 See John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement,* ed. Erin Kelly (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), Pt. I, §6.2-3, p. 15-16.
2 Ibid., §6.3, p. 16.
3 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan,* ed. Edwin Curley (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., Inc., 1994), Pt. I, ch. xi, par. 1, p. 57.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.

him free to define the good for himself. Hobbes substitutes for the teleological conception of the human good a private notion of the good based on each person's appetites and desires.

Locke also rejects a teleological notion of man's ultimate good and adopts the notion that each person can define the good for themselves. In his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* he writes,

> The Mind has a different relish, as well as the Palate; and you will as fruitlesly endeavor to delight all Men with Riches or Glory… as you would to satisfy all Men's Hunger with Cheese or Lobsters…. Hence it was, I think, that the Philosophers of old did in vain enquire, whether *Summum bonum* consisted in Riches, or bodily Delights, or Virtue, or Contemplation: And they might have as reasonably disputed, whether the best Relish were to be found in Apple, Plumbs, or Nuts…[6]

Once again, we see the rejection of an objective human good in favor of the good being reduced to personal preference. Locke's comparison of debates regarding the good to arguments about preferred foods and his use of "relish" and "palate" vividly illustrate that man's good comes down to personal taste. He says, "What has an aptness to produce Pleasure in us, is that we call *Good*…"[7] Locke clarifies that people define their conception of the good based on what they find pleasurable. Haig Patapan and Jeffery Sikkenga connect this to Locke's concept of the "pursuit of happiness," writing, "Locke argues that…. [w]e define what is good by what gives us 'Happiness,' which Locke defines as 'the utmost Pleasure we are capable of.'"[8] This, in turn, results in "[t]he person's pursuit of a 'greatest good' for him as a human being transform[ing] into the person's 'pursuit of happiness' for him as an individual."[9] Thus, for Locke as well as Hobbes, human happiness depends on the private conception of the good a person has.

John Rawls takes a slightly different approach to the question of the human good. Like Hobbes and Locke, he affirms that human beings can define their own conception of the good. He states, "Citizens are free

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[6] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), Bk. II, ch. xxi, §55, p. 269, ln. 11-14, 18-22.

[7] Ibid., §42, p. 259, ln. 2-3.

[8] Haig Patapan and Jeffery Sikkenga, "John Locke's 'Unease': The Theoretical Foundation of the Modern Separation of Church and State," *Political Theory* 52, no. 5 (2024): 822.

[9] Ibid., 824 (citations removed).

in that they conceive of themselves… as having the moral power to have a conception of the good.… [T]hey are seen as capable of revising and changing this conception on reasonable and rational grounds…"[10] Rawls even says the ability to do this is a fundamental liberty.[11] However, unlike Hobbes and Locke, Rawls does not say that this ability to define a conception of the good for oneself is because there is no objective human good to begin with. Rawls does not even provide an argument against this teleological conception of the human good. Instead, Rawls simply brackets the issue entirely and states that "reasonable pluralism," the presence of many competing conceptions of the good in the public sphere, is a fact of life. Objective conceptions of the human good are

> not… excluded by deductive argument…. Instead, they are ruled out by the historical conditions and the public culture of democracy that set out the requirements for… a modern constitutional regime. Among those historical conditions is the fact of reasonable pluralism…[12]

In response to those who would say that "the religiously true, or the philosophically true, overrides the politically reasonable," Rawls asserts that there is no place in public reason to investigate such claims: "We simply say that such a doctrine is politically unreasonable. Within political liberalism nothing more need be said."[13] Rawls states that the "fact" of reasonable pluralism requires society to structure itself to incorporate many different conceptions of the good, despite religious and philosophical arguments that there is an objective good that human nature inclines people toward. In a sense, he assumes what needs to be proved—that human nature does not incline man toward an objective good, or that this fact is unknowable to reason.[14]

Whatever the deficiencies in Rawls' refusal to provide an argument against an objective human good, one can see that rejecting a teleological conception of the human good, which humans are directed to by nature, is a common thread in liberal anthropology. It also leads to the second common feature of liberal anthropology, the characterization of human beings as driven primarily by their passions. Since the

[10] Rawls, *Justice as Fairness,* Pt. I, §7.4, p. 21.
[11] See ibid., Pt. III, §32.4, p. 113.
[12] Ibid., Pt. I, §8.2, p. 25.
[13] John Rawls, *Political Liberalism,* expanded ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), Pt. 4, p. 488.
[14] This is Allan Bloom's primary criticism of Rawls' system. See Allan Bloom, "Justice: John Rawls Vs. The Tradition of Political Philosophy," *The American Political Science Review* 69, no. 2 (1975): 648-662.

liberal tradition holds that there is no objective conception of the good determined by human nature, liberal thinkers must explain what the primary determining factor is in a person's private conception of the good. As seen above, Hobbes, Locke, and Rawls all say that a person seeks whatever they find brings them enjoyment or pleasure. Hobbes clarifies this by adding that enjoyment "ariseth… from the diversity of passions."[15]

Locke echoes this sentiment in the comments cited above about taste and palate, but he also argues that one particular passion is behind our actions: unease. Patapan and Sikkenga outline Locke's definition of unease as "'[a]ll pain of the body whatsoever and disquiet of the mind.' Purely bodily pains are those such as hunger and thirst, and other natural desires…. Disquiet of the mind is caused by ideas…"[16] Locke argues that unease compels humans to seek what they believe to be the good. After all, no one wants the pain, disquiet, and discontentedness that comes from feeling unease, so one seeks what they think will quell their unease and views whatever that is as good for doing so.[17] Lest anyone construe Locke's idea of unease like Augustine's restlessness, Patapan and Sikkenga explain how Locke's unease is not tied to any notion of an objective good:

> [Locke's unease] allows him to abandon finally the last vestiges of the "old Philosophers" and scholastics who argued… that we are by nature drawn toward a *summum bonum*. Consequently, Locke's unease is not like Augustine's *inquietum* and Pascal's *inquiètude*, a feeling of lacking some profound good in our lives, which makes us unhappy and thereby gives rise to a longing for that greater good. Rather, unease is based on physical and mental pain and need not necessarily point to or disclose our neediness for the divine.[18]

Since Locke's unease is based on physical and mental pain, it is clear that his account of human action is based on seeking what one believes to be the good in response to the pleasures and pains one is confronted with. Of course, it is the passions that govern pleasures and pains, which means that human action is motivated at the root by the passions, according to Locke. As seen above, this is Hobbes' position as well, but Patapan and Sikkenga argue that Locke's concept of unease represents

[15] Hobbes, *Leviathan,* Pt. I, ch. xi, par. 1, p. 57.
[16] Patapan and Sikkenga, "John Locke's 'Unease'," 824 (citations and footnotes removed).
[17] Cf. Locke, *Essay,* Bk. II, ch. xxi, §31.
[18] Patapan and Sikkenga, "John Locke's 'Unease'" 827.

a break with Hobbes' passions. However, they fail to demonstrate any fundamental disagreement between Hobbes' passions and Locke's unease; instead, they only show how Locke's concept of unease leads him to a different model of government than Hobbes' *Leviathan*. Thus, I argue that while Hobbes and Locke may differ on the implications that their theories have on governmental structure, the role of the passions in human action that they presuppose is essentially the same.[19]

Regarding the role of the passions, Rawls is more nuanced. He does not say that the passions are the primary driving force behind a person's actions. Instead, he says that a person defines their private conception of the good based on any number of "comprehensive doctrines" or worldviews. Whichever one a person deems as resulting in "a fully worthwhile life" is what defines their conception of the good.[20] Rawls names both "the fulfillment of… (rational) preferences" and the fulfillment of "desires (as in a utilitarian view)" as among what people consider to be a happy and worthwhile life,[21] so he clearly makes a place in his system of models of human action that place desire as the primary motivator, even if he differs from other liberal thinkers by not explicitly affirming such a model himself.

Thus, one can see that the liberal tradition presupposes a common anthropology that denies an objective conception of the good determined by human nature. Instead, it posits no teleological good or end for human beings and argues that without this, people are free to define their own private conception of the good. This conception is, in turn, heavily influenced by the pleasures and pains that people encounter in their lives, which elevates the passions to a place of prominence in the realm of human action, since it is the passions that govern pleasure or pain and, therefore, incline one to seek or not seek certain things inasmuch as one perceives them as good or bad. Having explored the liberal anthropology, its effects on liberal conceptions of church-state relations can now be analyzed.

As mentioned above, Hobbes, Locke, and Rawls all adopt a form of social contract in constructing their political systems. A closer look reveals that the government set up under the social contract secures the conditions necessary for people to pursue their private conception of the good for each of these thinkers. These thinkers only differ as to

[19] See Patapan and Sikkenga, "John Locke's 'Unease'," 827-829.
[20] Rawls, *Justice as Fairness,* Pt. I, §7.1, p. 19.
[21] Ibid., Pt. II, §17.3, p. 60.

what those necessary conditions are. For Hobbes, human beings have "a perpetual and restless desire for power after power, that ceaseth only in death" because they want the means to attain and secure the objects they desire.[22] However, because all people desire the same scarce goods and nature has made people relatively equal in their physical and mental faculties for securing these, this results in a state of constant competition where no one is secure in achieving their private conception of the good. This is what Hobbes calls the "war… of every man against every man."[23] From this, Hobbes argues that all people desire peace and security because it alone guarantees them the ability to pursue their private conceptions of the good without the threat of others.[24] Since the state is constituted so as to ensure peace and security, the direct purpose of the state is to secure the conditions under which people can pursue their conceptions of the good.[25]

Similarly, Locke says that the state is instituted to preserve people's civil interests, which he says are "Life, Liberty, Health, and Indolency of Body; and the Possession of outward things."[26] However, Locke makes clear that liberty is simply the means "whereby [men] may acquire what they… want" and that the reason for securing it, along with the other civil interests, is that they "contribute to the Comfort and Happiness of this Life."[27] As demonstrated above, the pursuit of "happiness of this life" for Locke is nothing other than the pursuit of one's private conception of the good. Thus, the civil interests that the state is instituted to protect are simply the conditions under which one can pursue their private conception of the good. Therefore, for Hobbes and Locke, securing the conditions necessary to pursue one's private conception of the good is the purpose and mission of the state.

Rawls' system is not much different. Having assumed the "fact" of reasonable pluralism, Rawls argues that despite their differing conceptions of the good, no person can achieve their conception of the good without human society and the resources and security it gives them. Thus, people must cooperate in society despite their different ideas of the good so that all can achieve their conceptions of the good. This is what Rawls means by his definition of society as a "fair system

[22] Hobbes, *Leviathan,* Pt. I, ch. xi, par. 2, p. 58.
[23] Ibid., ch. xiii, par. 8, p. 76; see also par. 1-4.
[24] Cf. ibid., ch. xiv, par. 4, p. 80.
[25] See ibid. Pt. II, ch. xvii, par. 13, p. 109.
[26] John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, ed. James H. Tully (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., Inc., 1983), p. 26.
[27] Ibid., 47.

of social cooperation."[28] But, as in any system of cooperation, there must be "publicly recognized rules and procedures" that govern conduct and cooperation.[29] Only with these in place can the conditions under which people can secure their conceptions of the good be realized. For Rawls, these conditions end up being none other than his two principles of justice, which serve to guarantee people the rights and goods requisite to pursuing any conception of the good and to mitigating social inequalities that may arise in society.[30] Once again, Rawls clarifies the point that the liberal state exists to protect and secure the conditions under which people can pursue their conceptions of the good.

The fact that the liberal state exists to secure people's ability to define and pursue the good as they see it has direct consequences on the relationship between the Church and the state in liberal thought. In each case, there is either an explicit or implicit subordination of the Church to the state and severe limitations placed on it, inasmuch as it threatens the liberal state's ability to secure the conditions under which people can pursue their private conceptions of the good. In Hobbes, this is explicit: Hobbes views the Church and its ecclesial hierarchy as embodying a rival sovereign to the state.[31] The presence of a rival sovereign that can command its subjects undermines the monopoly of power that the state sovereign is given in the social contract to preserve peace, which is the condition under which people can define and pursue the good for themselves.[32] Thus, the Church must be completely subordinate to the state to preserve this condition. Hobbes says the rights of judging what doctrines are true, preaching, and even administering sacraments are "annexed to the sovereignty" for "the preserving of peace and security," which is to say for preserving the ability to define and pursue one's private conception of the good.[33] As Hobbes summarizes, "[The civil sovereign] hath the supreme power in all causes, as well ecclesiastical as civil…"[34]

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[28] Rawls, *Justice as Fairness,* Pt. I, §2.1, p. 5.
[29] Ibid., §2.2, p. 6.
[30] See ibid. §2.3; Pt. II, §13.1, 3; §17.1-2.
[31] Since Hobbes indiscriminately defines the church as any group gathered together to profess the Christian religion, his comments on the relationship between the Church and the state extend indiscriminately to the Anglican Church, the Roman Catholic Church (against which much of the later parts of *Leviathan* is directed) or any church denomination.. See Hobbes, *Leviathan,* Pt. III, ch. xxix.
[32] Cf. Hobbes, *Leviathan,* Pt. II, ch. xix, par. 3, p. 119.
[33] Ibid., ch. xviii, par. 8-9, p. 113; see also Pt. III, ch. xlii, par. 71-72, p. 368-369.
[34] Ibid. Pt. III, ch. xlii, par. 80, p. 373; see also ch. xxxix, par. 5, p. 316.

Rawls and Locke are less explicit in their subordination of the Church to the state. Each supports the separation of Church and state[35] or claims to have a system that is neutral or indifferent to all "comprehensive doctrines of the good."[36] However, in their discussions of tolerance in a pluralistic society, they make several statements which imply a non-neutral position. Locke, for example, states in his *Letter Concerning Toleration* that the state is not to extend religious toleration to sects that promote doctrines that would "arrogate to themselves… some peculiar Prerogative… in effect opposite to the Civil Right of the Community."[37] Because such a practice is "contrary to… the preservation of Civil Society," these groups are not to be tolerated.[38] However, recall that the preservation of civil society for Locke is essentially the preservation of the ability to pursue one's private conception of the good since this is the purpose for which society is instituted. Thus, by not extending toleration to such groups, Locke says that any group that promotes opinions that give them authority over the state should not be tolerated because they will impose that authority on others and jeopardize people's ability to pursue the good as they see it. Significantly, he names several Roman Catholic teachings, such as the right of the Church to depose apostate kings, as among these adverse opinions, thus explicitly denying toleration in this case.[39]

Similarly, Rawls states that a group that sees its conception of the good as the true one and seeks to structure society accordingly is not to be tolerated if it has a realistic chance of overturning the Rawlsian system. This is because he views the group's acceptance of the Rawlsian system, structured around the two principles of justice, as only conditional, based on the fact that they are a minority who cannot restructure society according to the conception of the good they hold to be objectively true. Thus, he says, such doctrines are "a threat to democratic institutions, since it is impossible for them to abide by a constitutional regime except as a *modus vivendi.*"[40] The "democratic institutions" and "constitutional regime" Rawls refers to are nothing less than the Rawlsian system and its two principles of justice. Since these, as outlined above, are instituted to preserve people's right to define the good for themselves, Rawls is making the same point as Locke, that groups who infringe upon others' ability to define the good for themselves by promoting an objective good are not to be tolerated. He says

[35] See Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration,* 26.
[36] Cf. ibid, 26-27; Rawls, *Political Liberalism,* Pt. 2, Lect. V, §1.1, p. 175.
[37] Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration,* 49.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid., 49-50.
[40] Rawls, *Political Liberalism,* Pt. 4, p. 489.

such groups ought to be "curbed," which, though sounding mundane, leaves the door open for any variety of state actions against such groups in a Rawlsian polity.[41]

Thus, the liberal anthropology, with its view that there is no objective good for man and that he is free to define and pursue the good as he sees fit, directly affects the relationship between the Church and state that each of the liberal thinkers envisions. In each case, it results in explicit subordination of the Church to the state or severe limitations being placed on the freedom and toleration granted to the Church by the state since the Church's promotion of an objective human good directly confronts the purpose of the liberal state, which is to protect people's right to pursue whatever they imagine the good to be. With all of this in mind, I will now give a Thomistic critique of the liberal anthropology and explore how the Thomistic tradition has understood the relationship between the Church and the state.

To begin, Aquinas explicitly denies the fundamental premise of liberal anthropology, that there is no objective, final good for man. Aquinas argues that human nature inclines humans to an objective good that is in accordance with their nature.[42] Since man is by nature a rational being, the objective good that nature inclines him toward is living according to reason, or virtuous living.[43] Now, it is important to note that Aquinas does not believe these principles are believed solely by faith. Rather, Aquinas believes that this is philosophically demonstrable because it follows from God's governance of the universe through divine providence, in which God "direct[s] nature towards good as an end."[44] Since Aquinas believes that divine providence is rationally demonstrable,[45] then it follows that man's objective end is also demonstrable and knowable to human reason. This is a direct rebuttal to the liberal anthropological claim that man either has no objective good to which he is directed, or such a good is not knowable to human reason. In particular, it undermines Rawls' reliance on the "fact" of reasonable pluralism, for if man has the determinate end of virtuous living, which is knowable to human reason, then one cannot simply assume reasonable

41 Cf. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), Pt. 2, ch. IV, §35, p. 220.
42 Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologiae [ST],* trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, online edition, accessed November 11, 2024, https://www.newadvent.org/summa/, I-II.1.1.
43 Cf. ibid. I-II.1.3, 93.5.
44 Ibid. I.103.1 co.
45 See ibid. I.22.1 for Aquinas's demonstration of divine providence.

pluralism as Rawls does since it is equally reasonable that all people could come to know this end through the exercise of their rationality. In addition, Aquinas's argument that man is inclined to live according to reason and not according to passion further undermines the aspects of liberal anthropology that follow from its denial of an objective end for man, that man is primarily driven by the passions.[46]

Regarding the origins and purpose of the state, Aquinas states that "man is by nature a social and political animal,"[47] and people form political communities to "live *well* in a way that would not be possible for each of them living singly."[48] Thus, Aquinas believes that the state should promote the good of man by promoting virtuous living. However, Aquinas notes that man's final end does not consist solely in living a virtuous life in society: it has a further spiritual dimension to it since "through virtuous living" man "attain[s] to the enjoyment of the Divine"—the Beatific Vision, which is his ultimate and final end.[49] The state, being concerned merely with temporal living, cannot safely direct man to the transcendent, spiritual aspect of his end which is the Beatific Vision.[50] Thus, Aquinas says man "has need of another, spiritual, care by which he is guided towards the harbour of eternal salvation. And this is… the Church of Christ."[51] From this, Aquinas concludes that both the Church and the state are necessary for man to achieve his good and live well. The Church is needed to govern and provide "those things which pertain to the salvation of the soul," while the state is necessary to govern and provide "those things which pertain to the civil good."[52]

These two entities must work together and cooperate to fulfill Aquinas's vision of both of them governing and directing man to his good. However, the practicalities of how the Church and the state work together to make this happen are not entirely clear in Aquinas's thought.

[46] See also ibid. I-II.2.6, where Aquinas demonstrates that bodily pleasures toward which the passions incline people cannot constitute true happiness and the fulfillment of man's nature.

[47] Thomas Aquinas, *De regime principum,* Bk. I, ch. I, in Thomas Aquinas, *Political Writings [APW]*, ed. and trans. R.W. Dyson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 5-6.

[48] Ibid., ch. xv, 40 (emphasis mine).

[49] Ibid., 41. See also Thomas Aquinas, *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith [Summa Contra Gentiles]*, trans. Anton C. Pegis et al., online edition, accessed April 6, 2025, https://isidore.co/aquinas/ContraGentiles.htm, bk. 3, ch. 25.

[50] Cf. ibid. 39-40.

[51] Ibid. 40.

[52] Thomas Aquinas, *Scripta super libros sententiarum* II, Dist. 44, quaest. 3, in *APW,* 278.

He certainly makes clear that both are needed to direct man to his good and that the spiritual power is ultimately superior since it guides man to his higher, transcendent end.[53] Still, he does not specify the constitutions or governmental structures most conducive to Church-state relations. However, Pope Leo XIII, a disciple of Aquinas, provides one way it could take shape: the confessional state. In his encyclical *Immortale Dei,* Leo states that the close cooperation of Church and state produces "benefits… manifold and great" in civil society.[54] Drawing on Thomistic anthropology and divine providence, Leo says that the state arises naturally from man's desire to live well, both morally and intellectually, and argues that since the state "has its source in nature," it has, "consequently, God for its Author."[55] In light of these demonstrable facts, Leo says the state has a natural obligation to publicly recognize its origin in God and give thanks to Him by professing true religion.[56]

With this principle in mind, Leo outlines his vision for the confessional state. Roman Catholicism is recognized as the true religion and privileged by the state, giving the Church ample freedom to fulfill her divine mission. Leo says such an arrangement will bring about the benefits he speaks of in the opening section. By giving the Church the freedom to promote the gospel and teach virtue, Leo says the result will be a strong foundation for human rights, unifying beliefs in society, laws that are informed by truth and justice, reverence toward the authority of the state, and citizens who treat each other with charity and virtue.[57] All this, Leo says, is a result of the confessional state actively promoting true religion instead of relegating religious truth to a matter of personal opinion, like in a liberal society. In fact, Leo says that the privatization of religion and ignorance of the common good for the sake of the private good, characteristic of the liberal tradition, leads to societal degradation. This is because exiling religion to the private sphere casts aside the innumerable, valuable benefits that healthy Church-state cooperation can bring. Leo warns that such individualism is "not in itself an advantage over which society can wisely rejoice."[58]

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53 See Aquinas, *De regime principum,* Bk. I, ch. xv, 41.
54 Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei [ID],* §1, Vatican trans., https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_01111885_immortale-dei.html.
55 Ibid., §3.
56 Cf. ibid., §6.
57 See ibid., §17-19.
58 Ibid., §32.

Despite the strong opposition of the Thomistic tradition to core aspects of liberal political theory, Aquinas and Leo both note that, in Leo's words,

> [N]o one of the several forms of government is in itself condemned, inasmuch as none of them contains anything contrary to Catholic doctrine, and all of them are capable, if wisely and justly managed, to insure the welfare of the State.[59]

This is to say that the confessional state model is not the only way in which flourishing Church-state relations can be achieved, and society can be governed for the good of man. Instead, the Thomistic tradition allows that even a government structured according to a social contract model, such as Hobbes, Locke, and Rawls' systems, could, in theory, accomplish this. However, the obstacles would be significant. Firstly, as seen above, the liberal anthropology that is directly opposed by the Thomistic tradition plays an indispensable role in setting up the political systems envisioned by the liberal thinkers, as the goal of their state is to protect people's ability to define the good for themselves. Rawls and the other liberal thinkers see this as a way people are equal in society, that all are equally capable of defining the good for themselves. However, as Paul Weithman points out, Aquinas's defense of an objective good that is common to all men makes him understand equality differently than the liberal tradition:

> [I]n Aquinas's view, members of society are coparticipants in its common good…. He argues that realizing the common good depends upon harmonizing… differences so that each compensates for what others lack, and differences work for the good of all. He thinks that in a well-functioning political society, members complete or complement one another. Aquinas therefore endorses what might be called the complementarity view of political membership.[60]

Because of this fundamental understanding of human beings as having an objective good shared by all of them, a common good that they must work together in society to achieve, Weithman concludes that a complete synthesis between Thomistic political principles and democratic liberal political theory would be nearly impossible. As Weithman concludes,

> Since Aquinas held the complementarity view rather than the egalitarian view about political membership, he *did not* hold a democratic conception

[59] Ibid. §36.
[60] Paul J. Weithman, "Complementarity and Equality in the Political Thought of Thomas Aquinas," *Theological Studies* 59, no. 2 (1998): 280-281.

> of political equality. And since complementarity is central to his social as well as his political thought, framing a democratic Thomism would require significant revisions in Aquinas's position.[61]

I have now shown how the liberal tradition shares a common anthropology that denies an objective good that man is by nature guided toward and argues that all people are equally capable of defining their own private conception of the good. I have also demonstrated how this anthropology not only dictates how the liberal state is constituted, as it exists to ensure people's ability to define the good for themselves but also how this anthropology directly influences the liberal conception of Church-state relations, creating a society in which the Church must be "curbed" since it promotes an objective good. Lastly, I have also shown how Aquinas would attack the central premises of the liberal anthropology, arguing that an objective human good is rationally demonstrable through divine providence, and outlined how the Thomistic tradition has envisioned societies such as the confessional state where the Church and state work together to promote the common good of man.

[61] Ibid., 281-282, emphasis mine.

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