

POPE LEO'S PHILOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

And Its Relations to Modern Thought

By JOSIAH ROYCE, Ph.D.

Professor of the History of Philosophy, Harvard University

ONE of the most notable features of the work of the late Pope Leo was what is usually called his revival of scholastic philosophy. The movement of thought which has received this name is a very complex one. Its consequences have been varied, and have not been altogether such as the pope himself would appear to have foreseen. In any case they have involved phenomena that have a good deal of interest to the public outside of the Catholic Church. Many students of philosophy, of theology, and even of the natural sciences—students, I mean, who have no direct concern with any of the internal affairs of Leo's own religious body—are still forced, although outsiders, to recognize how important, for the general intellectual progress of our time, the future outcome of the whole Neo-Scholastic movement in the Catholic Church may prove. For if the process which Leo initiated continues to go on unhindered, the positive results for the increase of a wholesome cooperation between Catholic and non-Catholic investigators and teachers will probably be both great and wholesome. On the other hand, if this same process is seriously and effectively checked by the forces of conservative officialism within the Roman communion, the consequence will be a return to certain forms of controversy and of mutual misunderstanding amongst

demned by authority, a reaction came. Albert the Great, and later his still greater pupil, Thomas Aquinas, not only studied the relation between Aristotle's doctrine and that of the Christian Church, but undertook a systematic exposition and defence of the whole of Catholic theology in terms of the conceptions and of the principal philosophical teachings of Aristotle, in so far as such a synthesis of Christian theology and Greek thinking proved to be at all possible. This task was carried to completion by Thomas himself—the most famous of all the scholastic thinkers. Thomas very definitely distinguished between the proper office of philosophy (which, as he teaches, expresses what the unaided human reason can do to find out and to formulate natural and spiritual truth), and the office of faith (which enables us, as he holds, to be certain of revealed truths such as, in a large measure, transcend what reason can find out). Nevertheless, our scholastic doctor still assigned a very high rank to philosophy as an auxiliary to faith, and as an aid in formulating theological truth. He also vindicated for philosophy a certain limited, but very genuine, freedom of method and of opinion, within its own province. As a result, Thomas stands, from any fair point of view, Catholic or non-Catholic, decidedly high, not only as a theologian, but also as a rational philosophical inquirer.

of the school and the "certain and admitted results" of the modern study of nature. Meanwhile, as the pope adds, it is in no wise his intention to propose that the present age shall accept such results—if there are any such results—of the scholastic philosophy, as are found to be actually opposed to the ascertained truths that have come to light in later times. It is the wisdom of St. Thomas, that he means to emphasize and to bring again to honor; and he does not plead for the blind acceptance, along with this wisdom, of any demonstrable errors that the human fallibility of the scholastic doctors may have left standing in their works. In brief, while nearly the whole of what the pope says, in his encyclical, concerning St. Thomas, takes the form of the most emphatic and unqualified eulogy of that thinker's doctrine, modern Catholic scholarship is, in this letter, called upon to undertake the task of "increasing and perfecting the old by means of the new," and is required to make the deliberate effort to rethink the results of modern science in terms of the scholastic principles, while the admission is made that, in this process, there may indeed prove to be some results of scholastic philosophical inquiry which will have to be modified in the light of recent research. As for the harmony of modern science and scholasticism, that is expressly declared by the pope to have to do with the philosophical "principles;" and the pope tacitly leaves the reader to understand that he is well aware how imperfect was the knowledge of the special laws and facts of the natural world which the scholastic writers were able, in their time, to possess. Thus, however, the task defined by Leo's instructions is not confined to any mere restatement of the letter of the Thomistic doctrine, but extends to a deliberate undertaking to show that Catholic philosophy is adequate to cope, not only with the problems, but with the ascertained results and the positive achievements of modern inquiry. And so, while the invitation to participate in the intellectual work of the modern world, and to vindicate their own philosophy by explicitly applying it to the questions and to the

in France which, in 1800 he deplored, are not hard to trace. Instead of some brief, sharply worded paragraph about the "absurd errors" of Kant, such as the older scholastic compends were likely to contain, Leo's method as he outlined it in his encyclical, once actually applied to the study of philosophy, has now substituted the lengthy, careful, scholarly, sometimes bitter, but also sometimes very dispassionate reviews of modern thinkers, and of Kant among the number—reviews which are now so much more common than they used to be in the works of Catholic philosophers. After all, was not St. Thomas in his century tolerant in dealing with his philosophical adversaries? Was he not scrupulously fair in stating an opponent's case and almost invariably gentle in tone? And was he not ready on occasion to learn from the very Arabian philosophers whom he refuted? In fact, then, this Thomistic revival has certainly led to a spirit of increased care in expounding, and of increased fairness and gentleness in characterizing the philosophical and theological opponents of Catholicism. And therefore is it surprising that, without intending in the least to sacrifice their faith, certain of the French Catholic thinkers have been led, in the course of their studies, to find more truth in Kant than they had anticipated, and to assimilate him indeed to their own teachings, while in turn being in some degree assimilated by him. If some of these thinkers, disregarding the letter of Leo's original instructions, no longer make the philosophy of the school at all prominent in their teachings, is that more than one natural result of encouraging thoughtful men to attempt afresh the task of bringing the church near to the intellectual life of the modern world? A similar freedom, as we know, has appeared in a good deal of recent Catholic scholarship regarding questions of scripture criticism. And other symptoms of a relative spiritual independence are notable in many regions of Catholic thought upon which I cannot here enter.

IV.

numerous in Catholic theological literature. And the other problems about man's evolution, nature, and destiny are very frequently reviewed by writers of the same school. Here, too, the spirit of fairness and of thoroughness seems to be growing. Here, too, the mutual understanding between Catholic and modern thinking tends to increase. And here, indeed, from the nature of the problems at issue, Thomas's Aristotelianism seems to have an especially good chance to show its power to assimilate modern results. But nowhere more than here does the other tendency also inevitably assert itself. The traditional doctrines are in their turn assimilated. They grow nearer to those which they were to overcome. The result tends to a distinct modernizing of Catholic thought upon these as upon other fundamental matters.

V.

THE OUTLOOK

Is this process to continue? Where is it to end? Is it likely to have important consequences for modern thinking at large? I have already indicated my views as to these matters. The process here in question is, on the whole, of real importance to the intellectual world at large, because Catholic scholars are numerous, are often of great ability, and are men whose cooperation in the common interests of human thought is distinctly worth having. Unity of opinion is not so desirable, in this world, as is unity of spirit in the search for truth; and the later movement of Catholic thought has, on the whole, tended to a distinct increase in such unity between their activities and the world of modern inquiry. We who are without have no interest, as ourselves inquirers, in winning controversial victories over Catholics, or in converting them to our peculiar ideas. But we are interested in whatever helps them to take part in the common intellectual life of their time. We think that Leo, as a fact, helped them even more than he originally intended, to do just this thing. And if the process goes on unhindered, the final result must, we believe, prove very important both for Catholic thought, and for

be a return to certain forms of controversy and of mutual misunderstanding amongst some of the principal schools of modern opinion, a return which no lover of reason ought to welcome. The death of the pope, the choice of his successor, bring into prominence the distinctly practical issues whose nature is thus suggested. These issues concern, indeed, in the first place, the inner life of the Roman Church. But they also indirectly concern, in a genuine sense, the common interests of modern intellectual progress and of public education.

While I have, of course, neither right nor desire to form any opinion as to the motives and the merits of such partisan divisions and controversies as are present, at this critical moment, within the Catholic Church, I nevertheless feel, as a non-Catholic observer, as a student and teacher of philosophy, and also as one who occasionally has reason to consult current Catholic philosophical literature, a good deal of interest in the fortunes of the movement of thought which Leo initiated. I venture to give expression to this interest in the present form, because I suppose that others who, like myself, have no direct concern with the internal life of Catholicism, may still wish to get clearer ideas as to the intellectual relations of modern Catholic thought to modern civilization.

I.

THE PLACE OF PHILOSOPHY IN CATHOLIC INTELLECTUAL LIFE

If the so-called Neo-Scholastic movement which the late pope initiated, were indeed only a revival of scholastic metaphysics, and nothing more, it might seem to mean little for mankind at large. But, as a fact, from the very nature of Catholic scholarship, and because of the best established traditions of its educational system, the philosophy of the Catholic schools determines most of what is technically characteristic of the intellectual life of all representative Catholic thinkers. For Catholic theology, in expounding and defending the doctrines of its Church, has an intimate and conscious connection with philosophical opinions such as far surpasses the kind of union of dogma and speculation that other Christian bodies have in recent times been able to retain. In non-Catholic churches, in later periods, the religious life has been

ly high only as a theologian, but also as a rational philosophical inquirer. His was an essentially synthetic and harmonizing mind. Not only was his erudition, for his time, enormous; but his reflective working over of his massive and often very heterogeneous materials was marvellously ingenious and thorough going. While not a great originator of opinions, he was an organizer of thought, and as such was of very high rank. Through him scholastic philosophy attained its most perfect expression. He was especially successful in weaving into an at least plausible unity some of the most contradictory tendencies of Christian theology. Especially in dealing with the extremely difficult doctrine of the Church as to the relation between God and the world, and with the almost equally perplexing theological theory as to the nature of the human soul, and as to its relation with the body and with the natural and spiritual order generally, Thomas showed his skill as a harmonizer of conflicting opinions. Standing, as a philosopher, on the very brink, so to speak, of pantheism, he is still able, as a theologian, so to state the relation of God to the created world as to leave his own orthodoxy unquestionable, and pantheism discredited. Fully aware that a rational explanation of all things as due to God's plan seems to involve a philosophical determinism, Thomas nevertheless vindicated for man the freedom of the will. Accepting from Aristotle a theory of the soul which at first appears to make the mind quite inseparable from the body, Thomas still defends both the incorporeal nature of the soul and the rational necessity of the doctrine of immortality. And all these distinctions and unifications of doctrine he states with such clearness of style, with such subtlety of argument, with such serenity of manner, and with such gentleness towards all opponents, that both the labors of the thinker and the cruel tragedies of conflicting opinion involved seem, as one reads him, to fade into the background; and the reader remains, with the scholastic doctor himself, in the light of a very kindly spirit, and of a very ingenious intellect. One need not be convinced, in order to admire.

Now Thomas Aquinas has stood, from the first, very high amongst Catholic teachers. After a comparatively brief period in

applying it to the questions and to the ideas of today, occupies but a brief place in the closing paragraphs of the pope's Encyclical, there can be no doubt of the prominence of this aspect of his purpose in Leo's mind.

Now it is easy thus to assert that no ascertained result of modern science or philosophy is in conflict with the true principles of scholasticism. That assertion, in one form or another, may be found in the proper paragraph of almost any compend of scholastic philosophy. It is also easy to label any non-Catholic doctrine an error. That, too, the Catholic text-books, however brief, had not failed to do from time immemorial. But the novelty and the special interest of Leo's letter lies in the fact that he thus counselled his scholars to make good such assertions, first through a new and studious restoration of the classic scholasticism in its integrity, and secondly, through a deliberate effort to bring it into explicit relation to modern problems, and to make other people see the matter as the Catholic thinker saw it. When one adds that the pope, as it were, in parenthesis, admitted in two very brief but weighty passages of his encyclical that this process would inevitably involve certain modifications of the philosophical tradition in order to adjust scholasticism to the modern world, one begins to see how momentous for Catholic scholarship might prove to be the task which the pope set before his Church.

When you appeal afresh to the verdict, not merely of tradition, but of a renewed and living philosophy, you deliberately undertake the task, not merely of asserting what you believe, but of analyzing, and of making quite explicitly conscious, the grounds of your assertion. When you break away from mere compends and text-books, and require the detailed understanding of the whole work of as many-sided a thinker as was St. Thomas, you put yourself in the position of imitating not so much his mere formulas as his spirit of research. He lived, in his century, in a plastic age. He was a hero and a reformer of teaching. You tend to make men today try to be like him. When you undertake to assimilate, in a philosophical spirit, the whole result of modern inquiry, you inevitably expose yourself to the fate of

IV.

TENDENCIES IN ST. THOMAS WHICH INVITE CHANGE

I have spoken of some of the symptoms, in recent Catholic scholarship, of the growth of broader and fairer methods of investigation and of polemic than formerly prevailed. I am the more disposed to refer these symptoms, as effects, to the Neo-Scholastic movement as a direct or indirect cause, in view of the fact that St. Thomas Aquinas himself, typical Catholic thinker as he is, still furnishes in his method and in his system many features that especially seem to invite, yes almost to require, development, and in the end, change, just as soon as you try to use him, in the way contemplated by Leo, as a mediator between modern thinking and the doctrine of his Church. I have already indicated some of these features. To explain in any detail what they are, I should indeed have to enter upon technical philosophical problems. As a fact, Thomas's system is in its very essence an elaborate effort to mediate between opposing theological tendencies. In consequence, St. Thomas in his own day modified ideas even while he harmonized them. In this sense he was progressive. To study the detail of his thinking, in the light of modern inquiry, and then to undertake, in his spirit, still further theological mediations, this is inevitably to arouse into renewed growth the very type of philosophical thinking for which he stood, namely, the type of thinking which modifies former conceptions even in the act of defending them. But the problems of today are infinitely more complex than were those of the thirteenth century. The new mediations will tend in consequence, just in so far as they are pursued in St. Thomas's own spirit of thoroughgoing conscientiousness, to lead to greater changes in the conceptions of Catholic theology than he in his time brought to pass. If such change was at all to be dreaded by Catholic opinion, it would therefore, have been safer to leave St. Thomas imprisoned in the old fashioned scholastic compends and to leave modern thought to be condemned, in the old way, in a few brief paragraphs by these textbooks. Pope Leo, after all, "let loose a thinker" amongst his people—a thinker, to be sure, of unquestioned ortho-

result must, we believe, prove very important both for Catholic thought, and for spiritual good-will among men. Of course in this paper I have not attempted to estimate the vast forces that tend to keep Catholic thought conservative, and to crush out all these newer variations of opinion. Everyone knows that those conservative forces are vast, and that what I have here indicated forms only a part—and so, far, doubtless, a relatively small part of modern Catholic mental life. But I have meant to indicate the presence of a certain leaven that may, in time, serve to leaven the whole lump.

Of "liberal Catholicism" we have heard a good deal of late. We usually hear of it in connection with the political, or, in general with the worldly, activities of the Church. I confess that, as a political institution, as an organization having worldly interests and ambitions, the Catholic Church never awakens my sympathy and seldom even arouses any considerable interest in my mind. For in respect of these worldly matters, I can never fathom its true motives, nor understand its methods, while on the other hand I feel so sure of the ability of the modern world to take care of itself that I have no serious fear of the permanent triumph of what is called "clericalism." I recognize the practical importance of keeping safe the great principles of modern civilization. But I do not feel that these principles, at least in our country, are sufficiently endangered by any plans of clerical politicians to make the matter of our political relations to the Catholic Church one that has at present any great interest for me. On the other hand, the intellectual life of the Catholic Church seems to me something very interesting. The cause of sound thinking and of dispassionate inquiry has suffered so much in the past from dreary and bitter religious controversy that it is a welcome thing to see these symptoms of the coming of a time when the scholars of the Catholic Church may be willing to cooperate in the general progress of science and of philosophical inquiry rather than to condemn in block, as errors, thoughts which the clerical judges have not taken the trouble to understand. Is St. Thomas,

able to retain. In non-Catholic churches, in later periods, the religious life has been emphasized at the expense of dogma, and even doctrinal controversies, when they are recognized as vital, tend on the whole to free themselves as much as possible from philosophical technicalities. The philosophical education of the modern Protestant clergyman is consequently, in general, a decidedly uneven and accidental sort of training, whose amount is subject to very arbitrary variations, from man to man, and from school to school. But Catholic tradition has made the relation of theology and philosophy much closer and more uniform; and the most highly equipped and scholarly of the Catholic clergy have been submitted, in the course of their education, to an amount of technical philosophical discipline which one may or may not regard as useful, but which certainly gives to their philosophy a central importance in their minds. Any notable movement in Catholic philosophical training consequently affects the attitude of Catholic scholars towards all sorts of intellectual problems that fall within the range of their interest. Hence the Neo-Scholasticism which Leo initiated has influenced every aspect of what can be called the distinctively Catholic learning of Europe, and of this country. One must conceive then, the modern movement of thought in Pope Leo's Church as by no means confined to technical matters of scholastic doctrine.

On the other hand, one, indeed, must not exaggerate the nature of the philosophical reform which the pope undertook to bring to pass. Like every official act of his Church, Leo's famous instructions regarding the study of philosophy were explicitly the carrying out of a traditional policy in a new instance. Nothing was meant to be novel about the undertaking except the emphasis which the pope laid upon certain aspects of philosophical education, and the directions which he accordingly gave to teachers and to scholars as to the conduct of their studies. Nothing revolutionary was intended. The new movement was indeed, quite explicitly, a revival. But the intellectual situation in the modern world at the time when this revival was initiated, made the undertaking very fruitful, and, as a fact, productive of decidedly unex-

pected results. Thomas Aquinas has stood, from the first, very high amongst Catholic teachers. After a comparatively brief period in which he was the object of somewhat violent attack on the part of certain of his contemporaries and successors amongst scholastic theologians, the position of Thomas in the first rank of the doctors of his Church became unquestioned. Most of the teaching religious orders (as Pope Leo himself points out in his encyclical upon Thomas's philosophy), have long required, as a matter of rule, that the doctrines of Aquinas should be the model and guide for all their own instructors. Thomas has consequently been, for centuries, the typical scholastic theologian, and such rivals as he has had need not here concern us.

Nevertheless, despite the almost unbroken traditions of the primacy of St. Thomas amongst the scholastic teachers of doctrine, various motives have combined to make the study of his work at first-hand somewhat neglected, at certain periods, by the theologians of his Church. For even when he was fully recognized as the model for the teaching given in the various religious orders, it was possible and easy to substitute briefer compends for his own works, and the making of textbooks has been, amongst Catholic schools, much what it too often is elsewhere. One textbook may copy another, more or less unintelligently; tradition degenerates; and Thomas, as we now learn from Catholic sources, often used to be pretty far away and to remain in too large a measure unread, even when one professed to be teaching his opinions. Moreover, the course of contemporary controversy, as well as the ambitions of individual writers and teachers, often led Catholic schools to neglect their more strictly scholastic tradition altogether, for the sake of some other and more modern fashion of thinking. And in any case the voluminous works of the later scholastics, —men of very much less power than Thomas—were long likely to stand as a sort of barrier in the way of the older master, hindering students from getting a knowledge of his own writings at first hand, however much his primacy might be formally recognized.

It was in order, not so much to restore St. Thomas himself to this formally recog-

whole result of modern inquiry, you inevitably expose yourself to the fate of being in some measure assimilated yourself in the course of the process. For any man inevitably tends to become what he thinks. When you combine all these undertakings in one, and set the whole world of Catholic scholars to work enthusiastically upon the new task, you are likely to find, after twenty years or more have passed, that St. Thomas's spirit is, indeed, more potent than his letter, that the application of this spirit of inquiry to modern problems has indeed brought you into closer touch with the intellectual issues of the day, but that there is also a tendency to the modification and to the modernization of your own Catholic thinking—a tendency that goes farther than you at first had anticipated. Is this result for the best? That is a question that Catholics must answer for themselves.

As an outsider, I do not, I think, at all exaggerate the degree to which the intellectual life of Catholicism has actually been altered in the course of this process. I recognize how very conservative the great body of Catholic theologians have remained, and I do not imagine that either the dogmas or the political policy of that church will undergo any notable change at any early date in consequence of the movement of which I speak, no matter how far it goes. But what I do see, as I look over the recent literature of discussion, is (1) that there is a distinct increase of active coöperation on the part of Catholic scholars in the relatively neutral tasks of modern science and scholarship. I see also (2) that there is a great increase in the understanding and appreciation of philosophers (such, for instance, as Kant), whom Catholic teachers all used to condemn without reserve or knowledge, but whom some of them, notably in France, have lately been disposed not only to comprehend, but also, in certain respects, openly to follow. And (3) I also read, occasionally, efforts to show that there is nothing in the "philosophical principles" of scholasticism which is at all hostile to the transformation of species, or to the whole set of doctrines known by the name of evolution, in so far, at least, as these doctrines are matters of natural science. Nor are such views limited to men like the late unhappy Mivart—

loose a thinker" amongst his people—a thinker, to be sure, of unquestioned orthodoxy, but after all a genuine thinker whom the textbooks had long tried, as it were, to keep lifeless, and who, when once revived, proves to be full of the suggestion of new problems, and of an effort towards new solutions.

In three parts of his system St. Thomas, to my mind, especially invites some measure, at least, of critical reconstruction, so soon as you undertake carefully to review his position in the light of modern philosophical inquiry. First, his theory of the nature and limits of human knowledge, a theory derived from Aristotle, especially calls not merely for restatement, but for readjustment, & soon as you try to apply it to the interpretation of our modern consciousness. The historical dignity of this theory is unquestionable. We owe much to Leo and to the Neo-Scholastic movement for calling its problems afresh to our attention. But the very effort to bring this theory face to face with modern thought must result in a change of this traditional doctrine—a change which may be slow, but which will be sure to prove pervasive and momentous for Catholic philosophy. The before-mentioned Kantian movement amongst the French Catholic philosophers is but one symptom of this aspect of the new sort of thinking. The questions involved are technical, but they concern the whole problem of the scope and the office of religious faith, and so, in the end, they tend to modify the whole attitude of the theologians most concerned.

Secondly, the problem of the relations between God and the world, as St. Thomas treats that topic, is one which has only to be reviewed carefully, in the light of modern science and of modern philosophy, to secure an alteration of the essentially unstable equilibrium in which Thomas left this heaven-piercing tower of his speculation. Here I, of course, have no space to speak of a philosophical problem to which, as a student of philosophy, I have devoted so much of my own attention—namely, the problem about the conception of God. But when I read, in more than one recent philosophical essay of Catholic origin, expressions that admit the decidedly symbolic and human character of the language in

the clerical judges have not taken the trouble to understand. Is St. Thomas, the angelic doctor, destined to act as a peacemaker, and to teach his Church to love new light, even as, in his century, he also loved, and used, the new light that Aristotle seemed to him to bring.

If this result is to come about, it will inevitably involve, as I have pointed out, a certain assimilation of traditional Catholic ideas to those of modern thought. But I have, in addition, indicated what I firmly believe, namely, that such processes of assimilation are also inevitably mutual. I do not imagine either that the Catholic Church will ever abandon its characteristic dogmas, or that the modern thought which is now non-Catholic will ever again adopt those dogmas. But I do see that we who study modern philosophy, must gain by understanding the point of view which scholasticism represents, and what we shall gain is especially an increase of our sense of the historical continuity of human thinking—a sense which religious controversy has often tended to confuse. St. Thomas and his fellows have something to say to us, as well as to Catholics, and I am glad to have it said. Meanwhile, everybody has an interest in the substitution of reasonable mutual toleration, coöperation, and understanding, for blind hostility. Hence one watches with keen concern a process which seems to tend, in this sense, to the organization of a "liberal" form of Catholicism.

But will Catholic officialism—conservative as it is, political as its motives have to be, reactionary as its policy has so often been—will such officialism permit the new Catholic scholarship further liberty to develop on these lines? Will not the new pope, whoever he may prove to be, undertake to bring to a pause the evolution of these tendencies towards a reform of Catholic philosophy, and towards an era of good feeling between Catholic and non-Catholic science and scholarship? I confess to a good deal of doubt upon this subject. I confess also that I am rather disposed to anticipate a reaction against all this natural, but, as I fancy, officially unexpected growth that has taken place in the world of Catholic scholarship within the last two decades. The Catholic Church is today, as

teachers and to scholars as to the conduct of their studies. Nothing revolutionary was intended. The new movement was indeed, quite explicitly, a revival. But the intellectual situation in the modern world at the time when this revival was initiated, made the undertaking very fruitful, and, as a fact, productive of decidedly unexpected results. A brief explanation may help to indicate so far as the matter is one of public knowledge at all, both why the pope's plan was formed, and why it proved so effective.

II.

THE POSITION OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

The classic Catholic philosophy, which has so largely determined the nature of the theological training of the Catholic clergy, received its definite shaping during the thirteenth century. In that century, in fact, a decided revolution was actually effected; not, of course, in the doctrines of the Catholic Church (for these had long since been settled), but in the educational life of the Catholic schools, and especially in the way in which theological teaching came to be related to philosophy. Ever since, in the ninth century, the development of mediæval learning had been fairly begun, the Catholic schools had been seeking for a satisfactory technical guidance for their theological instruction. They had looked for such guidance not only in the tradition of the fathers of the Church, so far as that tradition was then accessible to them, but also in the thought of ancient philosophy, so far as documents which represented it were in their hands at all. The resources at the disposal of their scholarship long remained meagre. But at length a new light began to come to them in the form of a renewed knowledge of Aristotle, derived, at first quite indirectly, through Arabic sources. The philosophical system of Aristotle accordingly began to be of importance for the Catholic schools at the outset of the thirteenth century. After a period of suspicion and of hostility, in the course of which Aristotle's doctrine was even at one time con-

Thomas were long likely to stand as a sort of barrier in the way of the older master, hindering students from getting a knowledge of his own writings at first hand, however much his primacy might be formally recognized.

It was in order, not so much to restore St. Thomas himself to this formally recognized dignity which, in the minds of Catholic teachers, he had never lost, as to secure for his original works a study, and for his methods as a thinker the prominence which Leo held to be their due, that the late pope, almost at the outset of his pontificate, in the encyclical of Aug. 4, 1879, directed that the "precious wisdom of St. Thomas" should be restored to its ancient place, should be propagated as widely as possible, should be applied to the defence of the Catholic faith against assailants, should be studied as carefully as possible in its original sources, and should be interpreted as the regular basis for the philosophical instruction in Catholic schools.

III.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE POPE'S ENCYCLICAL

So far the pope's letter appears, to the external observer, to be concerned with matters that interest his own clergy and their pupils almost exclusively. But the encyclical has another aspect, and emphasizes another purpose that the author had in mind. The philosophy of St. Thomas, so Leo points out, must, in the pope's opinion, prove especially useful in combating the errors of modern thought, and in stating the case of the Church to the world of today. Therefore to the end that the revival of the study of the greatest of the scholastic doctors shall prove effective in serving the purposes of the modern Church, the pope, towards the close of his encyclical, emphasizes the importance of studying modern philosophical and scientific problems in the light of the Thomistic doctrine. The physical sciences, Leo insists "will not only receive no detriment, but will greatly gain from a restoration of the older philosophy." There is, he is assured, "no conflict" between the "philosophical principles"

to show that there is nothing in the "philosophical principles" of scholasticism which is at all hostile to the transformation of species, or to the whole set of doctrines known by the name of evolution, in so far, at least, as these doctrines are matters of natural science. Nor are such views limited to men like the late unhappy Mivart—men who are at heart only half-way Catholics, and who, any day, may have to break with their Church as he did. No, I find such views maintained, with various modifications, by men whose position amongst the faithful seems, at least, when viewed from without, to be quite secure.

The late pope in 1890 expressed in a letter to the French bishops his deep sorrow over the just mentioned movement amongst French Catholic philosophers in the direction of Kant's philosophy. And it is quite true that this movement is, on its face, opposed to the spirit, as it very certainly is to the letter, of the encyclical of 1879. Yet the links that bind the original effort which Leo initiated to the philosophical movement



is the New and Better Breakfast Food, so different from all others that it pleases everybody. Get a package to-day at your grocers.

THE GENUINE PURE FOOD CO., LE ROY, N. Y.
(**)27t 3y 16

POSTAGE STAMP COLLECTION FOR SALE
4600 varieties in fine condition, some rare. Address
D. V. H., Boston Transcript. [*]WSat: 3y 29

to speak of a philosophical problem to which, as a student of philosophy, I have devoted so much of my own attention—namely, the problem about the conception of God. But when I read, in more than one recent philosophical essay of Catholic origin, expressions that admit the decidedly symbolic and human character of the language in which even the dogmas of the Church have to be expressed, so far as they relate to the nature of God, when stress is also laid, very rightly, upon that aspect of St. Thomas's teaching which emphasizes this very inadequacy of even the traditional formulas to the business of defining divine things, when I meet at the same time with admissions that St. Thomas's positive theory of the divine attributes involves these or these apparent contradictions, which still need philosophical solution—then indeed, I see, not that our modern thinking is wholly right and Thomas wrong—but that Catholic theology is nowadays in a position where it is bound either to progress, or else to abandon the whole business of reviving the spirit of serious philosophical thinking. I see, too, that St. Thomas as a mere authority does not suffice for the purposes even of my Catholic brethren, but that St. Thomas as a thinker has set them afresh to thinking, so that they, like the rest of us, are living in an age of transition. They will no doubt keep their essential dogmas; but they will tend to conceive the contents of these dogmas in new ways. And that process, in the course of centuries, will go very far, unless they somehow arbitrarily cut it short, by ceasing to philosophize.

In the third place, the beforementioned doctrine of St. Thomas as to the nature of the human soul, and as to its relation to the body, and as to the sense in which man possesses free will and individuality—all this doctrine is one especially liable to modification and readjustment in the light of modern inquiry. Here chance, to be, in fact, one of the favorite regions of study for the neo-Thomistic authors. Essays and volumes on the relations between Thomism and modern psychology are very

feeling between Catholic and non-Catholic science and scholarship? I confess to a good deal of doubt upon this subject. I confess also that I am rather disposed to anticipate a reaction against all this natural, but, as I fancy, officially unexpected growth that has taken place in the world of Catholic scholarship within the last two decades. The Catholic Church is today, as of old, an institution under the control of men to whom scholarship and even wisdom will always be secondary to motives of a decidedly worldly sort. I cannot hope that the officials will, in the long run, tolerate the philosophers, unless the latter show themselves less vital in their inquiries, and less eager in their mental activities, than they have recently been.

But what an admirable opportunity for a genuine spiritual growth will be lost if Leo's revival of Catholic philosophy has even its first fruits cut off, and is not permitted to bear the still richer fruit that, in case it is unhindered, it will some day surely bring forth.



Mellin's Food and Milk is an ideal combination and will nourish and strengthen your baby and make him grow.

We should like to send a sample of Mellin's Food free to your baby.

MELLIN'S FOOD CO., BOSTON, MASS.