

Chapter IV.

Saint Thomas and the Intellectual Mores

Authority in the order of science is the weakest of arguments (1) but, as we have seen, in the order of the acquisition of science it is the only support the student has. When this authority is infallible and has appointed the teacher for its students, then the student may advance with the greatest security. Such is the case when we follow St. Thomas in our intellectual formation.

During the time of formation the student, becoming accustomed to the things he hears and thereby having an inclination to them per modum naturae, is dependent on the movement of his will. He accepts what he is taught because the doctrine falls under his virtue of obedience to the authority of the Church, because he hopes to obtain the fullness of truth in so far as possible, or because he is drawn by affection to his teacher. We shall now treat the approbation which the Church has given to St. Thomas and which entails on the part of the student the obligation of obedience to follow St. Thomas. Then, we shall mention the certitude which the student has in studying St. Thomas. Lastly, we shall suggest the best means to use in this study.

(1) - Ia, qu. 1, a. 8, ad 2.

I. - The Approbation of St. Thomas.

1) - The different degrees of approbation given by the Church to doctrine and teachers are distinguished as follows :

A) - The first is a general approbation in so far as permission is given that a book be published. It consists in the nihil obstat and the imprimatur and is given by the Bishop of a diocese. It permits a negative certitude in so far as it indicates that no error has been detected. It does not mean that the doctrine is authorized by the Church.

B) - The second form of approbation is given to the doctrine of outstanding theologians or philosophers who are considered as authorities because of their achievements in learning. Thus a Catholic university may have a "chair of Scotus" or a "chair of St. Thomas" etc. These scholars have been founders of determined schools of thought and accordingly we speak of Thomists, Scotists, Suarezians, Molinists Banesians etc. According to this approbation Cardinal Cajetan, John of St. Thomas, Scotus, Suarez, Molina and Banex are recognised as "experts" in theology but their authority is one only of human authority and not that of the Church.

Thus in matters which are open to dispute as, for example, different explanations of the doctrine of St. Thomas, or of questions which are a matter of opinion, the Church does not enter with determination.

For example, the Church has not given preference to the Thomistic School over the Molinist school in the question of grace. Concerning this freedom Pope Pius XII writes :

We desire that the lovers of St. Thomas - and all sons of the Church who devote themselves to higher studies should be so - be incited by an honourable rivalry in a just and proper freedom which is the life-blood of studies, but let no spirit of malevolent disparagement prevail among them, for any such, so far from helping the truth, serves only to loosen the bonds of charity. Let everyone therefore inviolably observe the prescription contained in the Code of Canon Law that "teachers shall deal with the studies of mental philosophy and theology and the education of their pupils in such sciences according to the method, doctrine and principles of the Angelic Doctor and religiously adhere thereto"; and may they conform to this rule so faithfully as to be able to describe him in very truth as their master. Let none require from another more than the Church, the mistress and mother of all, requires from each; and in questions, which in Catholic schools are matter of controversy between the most reputable authorities, let none be prevented from adhering to whatever opinion seems to him the more probable (Studiorum Ducem, p. 237-8).

Pope Pius XII :

It is true that Popes generally leave theologians free in those matters which are disputed in various ways by men of very high authority in this field (Romani Generis, n. 19).

Of course this philosophy deals with much that neither directly nor indirectly touches faith or morals, and which consequently the Church leaves to the free discussion of experts (n. 30).

We might note here points of importance. First, as Pope Pius XII clearly points out everyone must follow St. Thomas according to the prescription of Canon law so all schools accept him as their master; in this sense all schools of thought must be "Thomistic" - whether the members of the schools be Thomists, Suarezians, or Scotists. This is according to the obligation of obedience to the infallible authority of the Church. Secondly, regarding the intellectual works - the "thomistic school" comprised of such commentators as Cardinal Cajetan and John of St. Thomas and their followers has no greater approbation than any other school as such; theirs is only a human authority. The important end to be kept in view is always whether these commentators or schools lead the student to the mind of St. Thomas.

C) - The third form of approbation is given by the Church to saintly writers by giving them the title of "Father" (reserved for the writers of the early centuries) or "Doctor" of the Church. This form, then, is completely different from the second as their doctrine is supported by the authority of the Church. Thus, their books may be used in schools for teaching and in the ecclesiastical offices or liturgy. This honor then indicates that their writings may be used publicly and privately as authoritative sources, and that these saints are to be considered as among the first and special teachers in the Church. Among their number

are Saints Gregory, Basil, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Thomas, Bonaventure, Albert, Robert Bellarmine, Alphonsus Ligouri, Francis de Sales, Peter Canisius, etc.

D) - The fourth approbation is still greater. It indicates that the Church has approved as "veridica et Catholica" the teaching of these Doctors. The certitude attached to their teaching, then, is more than that of theological certitude had in theological conclusions deduced according to the rules of logic from revealed principles; it partakes of the ecclesiastical certitude or the certitude of the faith of the Church. There are three Doctors who have been so approved : St. Alphonsus Ligouri in moral theology, St. Augustine and, especially, St. Thomas. Because of this approbation the Catholic is absolutely certain that the doctrine of St. Thomas is true.

E) - The fifth approbation consists in the Church declaring that some particular doctrines are more probable or are certain.

F) - The sixth consists in the Church accepting and defining a certain doctrine to be "de fide" so that to deny it would be heresy (1).

From the authoritative declarations of the Church we now wish to show that St. Thomas has received the special approbation of the Church mentioned under the fourth mode.

(1) - John of St. Thomas, Curs. Theol., t. I, disp. I, a. 1, p. 225-228.

2) - For a complete treatment of this approbation the reader is referred to John of St. Thomas (*Cursus Theologicus*, Solennes, ed., t. I, p. 232 ff.) and to Père J. J. Berthier, o.p. (*Sacras Thomas Aquinas, "Doctor Ecclesiae"*, v. I, *Testimonia Ecclesiae*, Rome, 1914). Father Berthier lists sixty-four Popes who have referred to St. Thomas; to this list must be added the names of Benedict XV, Pius XI and Pius XII. Some of these declarations are as follows :

A) - The special approbation is indicated by Pope John XXII in the bull of canonization of St. Thomas. "He alone enlightened the Church more than all the other doctors; a man can derive more profit from his books in one year than from a lifetime spent in pondering the philosophy of others". (*Redemptorem*, July 18, 1323. *Curs. Theol.*, p. 232).

B) - Urban V :

Above all we wish and by the tenor of these present letters we enjoin that you follow the doctrine of the aforesaid Blessed Thomas as true and Catholic (veridicam et catholicam) and to strive with all your strength to develop it. (Bull : *Laudabilis Deus*, 1370, *Curs. Theol.*, p. 233).

C) - Innocent VI :

His doctrine exceeds all others, with the exception of canon law, in propriety of expression, precision of definition and truth of statement, so that those who have once grasped it are never found to have deviated far from the path of truth; and anyone impugning it has always been held suspect of error. (Quoted in "*Aeterni Patris*". Maritain, p. 207).

D) - Pius V speaks of the most certain rule of Christian doctrine by which St. Thomas adorned the Church. (Dall ; Mirabilis Deus, 1567, Curs. Theol., p. 234). It was Pius V who gave St. Thomas the title of "Angelic Doctor".

E) - Leo XIII in his Encyclical "Aeterni Patris" states that among all the scholastic Doctors St. Thomas is the leader and teacher of all and is by far above them all because he has taken their learning, added his own and united all in a wonderful order; he mentions the honor paid St. Thomas by the different Popes - Clement VI, Nicholas V, Benedict XIII, Pius V, Clement XII, Urban V, Innocent XII, Benedict XIV, - and by the Councils of Lyons, Vienne, Florence, Vatican, and especially the Council of Trent where the three sources of doctrine were the Sacred Scriptures, the Papal decrees and the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas; he then decries the tendency of Catholics after the Reformation to be drawn by the desire of new learning so that they laid aside the "patrimony of the ancient learning"; thereupon, he exhorts scholars to return to the doctrine of St. Thomas and especially to give to the student "those pure streams of wisdom flowing from St. Thomas". He states :

They were therefore very happily inspired - those numerous devotees of philosophical sciences who in a recent attempt usefully to restore philosophy endeavoured and continue their endeavours to revive the excellent philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas and to re-establish it in the esteem in which it was

once held. -- We heartily commend their undertaking and encourage them to persevere in their design. We warn you, each and everyone, that there is nothing We have so long and so earnestly desired as that you all offer generously and copiously to youth engaged in studies the limpid streams of wisdom which flow from the Angelic Doctor as from an abundant, inexhaustible stream. (p. 210).

We earnestly exhort you, Venerable Brethren, for the protection and glory of the Catholic Faith, for the welfare of society, for the advancement of all sciences, to restore the precious wisdom of St. Thomas and to propagate it as far as possible. (p. 213).

In a letter to the General Minister of the Friars Minor, Leo XIII says that he has sufficiently indicated in his Encyclical the way which must be followed in higher studies. He adds that an unconsidered departure from the wisdom of the Angelic Doctor is contrary to his will and a matter filled with danger, for whoever wishes to be a philosopher should find the beginnings and foundation of doctrine in St. Thomas (A. S. S., v. 31 (1898), p. 264).

In an allocution to scientists Pope Leo reiterated that the remedy against the disturbance and confusion of minds is to be found in philosophy and that the best form of philosophy is that elaborated by the effort and genius of St. Thomas following his acquisition of ancient wisdom; he concludes by asking his auditors to impress his words concerning St. Thomas deeply in their minds and to observe them religiously. "Pauca haec --

alte in animos vestros inserite et religiosè servate" (A. S. S., v. 12, (1879), p. 186).

F) - Pope Pius X in his Motu Proprio "Doctoris Angelici":

So far as studies are concerned, it is Our will and We hereby explicitly ordain that the Scholastic philosophy be considered as the basis of sacred studies. -- And what is of capital importance in prescribing that Scholastic philosophy is to be followed, we have in mind particularly the philosophy which has been transmitted to us by St. Thomas Aquinas. It is our desire that all the enactments of Our Predecessor in respect thereto be maintained in full force; and, where need be, We renew and confirm them and order them to be strictly observed by all concerned (From Letter "Sacrorum Antistitum", Sept. 1, 1910, p. 215).

Now because the word We used in the text of that letter (Sacrorum Antistitum addressed to all Bishops and Superiors of Religious Orders) recommending the philosophy of Aquinas was "particularly" and not "exclusively", certain persons persuaded themselves that they were acting in conformity to Our Will or at any rate not actively opposing it, in adopting indiscriminately and adhering to the philosophical opinions of any other Doctor of the School, even though such opinions were contrary to the principles of St. Thomas. They were greatly deceived (at eos multum animus fefellit). In recommending St. Thomas to Our subjects as supreme guide in the Scholastic philosophy, it goes without saying that Our intention was to be understood as referring above all to those principles upon which that philosophy is based as its foundation -- So the principles of philosophy laid down by St. Thomas Aquinas are to be religiously and inviolably observed, because they are the means of acquiring such a knowledge of creation as is most congruent with the Faith; of refuting all the errors of all the ages, and of enabling men to distinguish clearly what things are to be attributed to God and to God alone. They also marvellously illustrate the diversity and analogy between God and His works, -- (p. 215).

The reason is that the capital theses in the philosophy of St. Thomas are not to be placed in the category of opinions capable of being debated one way or another, but are to be considered as the foundations upon which the whole science of natural and divine things is based; if such principles are once removed or in any way impaired, it must necessarily follow that students of the sacred sciences will ultimately fail to perceive so much as the meaning of the words in which the dogmas of divine revelation are proposed by the magistracy of the Church. (p. 217).

We therefore desired that all teachers of philosophy and sacred theology should be warned that if they deviated so much as a step, in metaphysics especially, from Aquinas, they exposed themselves to grave risk. - We now go further and solemnly declare that those who in their interpretations misrepresent or affect to despise the principles and major theses of his philosophy are not only not following St. Thomas but are even far astray from the saintly Doctor. If the doctrine of any writer or Saint has ever been approved by Us or Our Predecessors with such singular commendation and in such a way that to the commendation were added an invitation and order to propagate and defend it, it may easily be understood that it was commended to the extent that it agreed with the principles of Aquinas or was in no way opposed to them.

We have deemed it Our apostolic duty to make this declaration and order so that the clergy, both regular and secular, may clearly know Our will and mind in a matter of the gravest importance, and fulfill our desire with appropriate alacrity and diligence (pp. 217-218).

6) - Pope Benedict XV in the Encyclical "Fausto Appetente Die" while naming St. Thomas as the Teacher and Patron for Catholic schools

states : "The Church has declared the doctrine of St. Thomas to be her own peculiar doctrine" (Thomas doctrinam Ecclesia suam propriam edixit esse) (A. A. S., v. 13, (1921), p. 332).

II) - Pope Pius XI in an Apostolic Letter "Officiorum omnium Sanctissimum" says that by Scholastic Philosophy he means the philosophy diligently elaborated by the labors of the holy Fathers and the Doctors of the School and brought to its highest degree of perfection by the industry and genius of Thomas Aquinas (A. A. S., v. 14, (1922), p. 14).

In his Encyclical "Studiorum Ducem" :

We so heartily approve the magnificent tribute of praise bestowed upon this most divine genius that We consider that Thomas should be called not only the Angelic, but also the Common or Universal Doctor of the Church; for the Church has adopted his philosophy for her own, as innumerable documents of every kind attest (p. 227).

The Holy Father in this same Encyclical points out the preeminence of St. Thomas in all fields of sacred learning : Apologetics, dogmatic theology, moral theology, ascetical and mystical theology, Sacred Scripture, and liturgy, as appreciated in the Mass and Office of the feast of Corpus Christi. He adds :

The teaching of Aquinas must be adhered to more religiously than ever (p. 236).

Accordingly, just as it was said to the Egyptians of old in time of famine : "Go to Joseph", so that they should receive a supply of corn from him to nourish their bodies, so we now say to all such as are desirous of the truth : "Go to Thomas", and ask him to give you from his ample store the food of substantial doctrine wherewith to nourish your souls unto eternal life (p. 237).

Let everyone therefore inviolably observe the prescription contained in the Code of Canon Law. (p. 238).

I) - Pope Pius XII in the Encyclical "Humani Generis" repeats the injunction so often given by his predecessors :

If one considers all this well, he will easily see why the Church demands that future priests be instructed in philosophy "according to the method, doctrine and principles of the Angelic Doctor", since, as we well know from the experience of centuries, the method of Aquinas is singularly prominent both for teaching students and for bringing truth to light; his doctrine is in harmony with divine revelation, and is most effective both for safeguarding the foundation of the faith, and for reaping, safely and usefully the fruits of sound progress (p. 31).

J) - What had been said by so many Popes regarding the authority of St. Thomas and their will that St. Thomas be followed was placed formally into the law of the Church in 1917.

Philosophiae rationalis ac theologiae studia et alumnorum in his disciplinis institutionem professores omnino pertractent ad Angelici Doctoris rationem, doctrinam et principia, eaque sancte teneant. (Codex Iuris Canonici, Can. 1366, par. 2).

Teachers are in every particular to treat of the studies of philosophy and theology and the education of students in these disciplines according to the method, doctrine and principles of the Angelic Doctor and religiously to adhere thereto.

K) - John of St. Thomas offers an argument for the authoritative approval of the doctrine of St. Thomas from the Liturgy of the Mass for the feast of St. Thomas, March 7th. The collect reads :

O God, who didst enlighten thy Church by the wonderful learning of Blessed Thomas, confessor and doctor, and didst enrich it by his works; grant, we beseech Thee, to understand with our intellects what he taught and to fulfill by imitation what he performed.

John of St. Thomas points out that it is in this prayer alone that the Church asks God to understand what a Doctor has taught; as the request is without restriction and since the Church would not ask God to understand a doctrine in which error would be found, we may conclude that the Church gives its authoritative approval to his entire doctrine (1).

Note : concerning the objections brought against the teaching of St. Thomas see Cursus Theologicus of John of St. Thomas, t. I, disp. 2, p. 261 ff. : De propositionibus erroneis quae in Divum Thomam obliuntur.

It must be remembered that as a theologian St. Thomas always proceeded from the principle of the "sensus Ecclesiae"; since his time the "sensus Ecclesiae" has become more determinate in some doctrines as, for example,

(1) - Curs. Theol., t. I, p. 230.

the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. As a philosopher, he proceeded from the principles of sense data; therefore, in the philosophical works which approach greater concreteness and which depend on experimental sciences he was unable to have the sense perception permitted today by advanced scientific instruments; therefore, much in these works can no longer be held, although the method used by St. Thomas remains the true method. The errors found are "material" not "formal".

L) - When speaking about obedience to law as the source of our intellectual mores we mentioned that custom has the aspect of law. Therefore, it is of importance to note how frequently the Holy Fathers in the pronouncements mention the fact that St. Thomas was a faithful follower of custom. St. Thomas had the greatest respect for the Doctors of the Church who preceded him and for the great philosophers of ancient times culminating in Aristotle and of his own time as the Arabian and Jewish philosophers. In studying St. Thomas, one is studying a treasury of wisdom and learning. Thus, Leo XIII says :

Above all the Doctors of the Schools towers the figure of Thomas Aquinas, the leader and master of them all, who, as Cajetan remarks (Italico, qu. 118, a. 4, n. 6) "because he had the utmost reverence for the Doctors of antiquity, seems to have inherited in a way the intellect of all". Thomas gathered their doctrines together - they had long lain dispersed like the scattered limbs of a body - and knitted them into one whole. He disposed them in a marvellous order and increased them to such an extent that he is rightly and deservedly considered the pre-eminent guardian and glory of the Catholic Church. His mind was at once docile and penetrating, his memory quick and retentive, the character of his life irreproachable his devotion to truth single and unqualified, his learning in things human and divine superabundant (Aeterni Patris, p. 205).

His doctrine was so great that, like a sea, he gathered in himself all the wisdom flowing from the ancient teachers. (Apostolic Letter, A. S. S., v. 13 (1880) p. 56).

Pope Pius X in "Angelici Doctoris" :

The principles of St. Thomas, considered generally and as a whole, contain nothing but what the most eminent philosophers and doctors of the Church have discovered after prolonged reflection and discussion in regard to particular reasons determining human knowledge, the nature of God and creation, the moral order and the ultimate end to be pursued in life (p. 216).

St. Thomas perfected and augmented still further by the almost angelic quality of his intellect all this superb patrimony of wisdom which he inherited from his predecessors and applied it to prepare, illustrate and protect sacred doctrine in the minds of men. Sound reason suggests that it would be foolish to neglect it and religion will not suffer it in any way to be attenuated. (p. 217).

Pope Pius XII in the Encyclical on the Mystical Body :

You are aware, Venerable Brethren, of the brilliant language used by the masters of Scholastic Theology, and chiefly by the Angelic and Common Doctor, when treating this question; and you know that the reasons advanced by Aquinas are a faithful reflection of the mind and writings of the Holy Fathers, who after all merely repeated and commented on the inspired word of Sacred Scripture (Paulist Transl. n. 36).

In conclusion to these pages concerning the approbation of St. Thomas by the Church as the teacher of Catholic students we must insist on the fact that it is a matter of obedience on the part of teachers to teach and on the part of students to study the method, doctrine and principles of St. Thomas. As a Catholic, one has no choice in the matter. Thus in the formation of the intellectual mores of the student, in becoming accustomed to what he hears so that he tends to the doctrine "per modum naturae" under the influence of the will, it is the moral virtue of obedience, residing in the will, that has the important role of moving the intellect to accept the doctrine of St. Thomas because it is good. Once the student has developed he will be able to see it as true.

3) - The other two habits in the will which may influence the formation of the intellectual mores, as mentioned above, are hope and affection.

Just as a person may be drawn to imitate a successful actor, athlete or business man because by so doing one hopes to attain to the same success, so a student may imitate St. Thomas. Once the student realizes the treasure of wisdom possessed by St. Thomas, he is drawn to study him with diligence and to accept his doctrine because he hopes, thereby, to acquire wisdom himself.

Affection for the teacher, likewise, has a great influence on a

student's efforts. If he likes the professor, it is easier to study under him and to accept what he says; the doctrine is received not so much because the student has evidence that it is true but because the doctrine is good, - covered with the affection one has for the teacher. Recognizing this force of devotion for one's teacher, Pope Pius XI has written :

Let them be persuaded that they will discharge their duty and fulfill our expectation when, after long and diligent perusal of his writings, they begin to feel an intense devotion for the Doctor Aquinas and by their exposition of him succeed in inspiring their pupils with a like fervor and train them to kindle a similar zeal in others.

We desire that the lovers of St. Thomas - and all the sons of the Church who devote themselves to higher studies should be so - (p. 237).

The great praise due Pope Leo is to have restored christian philosophy in arousing a love and devotion to the Angelic Doctor. Leonis magna laus est philosophiam christianam, excitato Doctoris angelici Prefecto ipsius amore cultrique, instaurasse (1).

When the Catholic student considers the obedience, hope and affection which leads him to St. Thomas so that he may accustom himself to the doctrine of Aquinas let him remember that in his subjection to his Teacher he has the example of St. Thomas himself to follow. From what has been said there can be no doubt of the great obedience, respect and devotion

(1) - Apostolic Letter : A. A. S. v. 14 (1922), p. 454.

St. Thomas had to the authority of the Church and the Fathers and Doctors of the Church. This is evident from the great number of quotations from the Fathers and his care in explaining their doctrine according to truth when adversaries would twist their meaning into error. His respect for his teacher St. Albert is well known. The same devotion is shown by the fidelity with which he followed the Sentences of Peter, the Lombard; when in the Summa Theologica he changes his opinion from that he held when commenting on the Sentences, he is careful to remark the change. Likewise, in his commentaries on the philosophical works of Aristotle he adheres most closely to the text of Aristotle and is careful to explain any apparent contradiction or error found there. It was because the intellectual mores of St. Thomas were so perfect that he became the "Prince of teachers" and the "Common and Universal Doctor of the Church". So, not only is St. Thomas the perfect Teacher for the Catholic student but he is also the example of the perfect Student. Therefore, following the example of St. Thomas towards the Church and his teachers, the student in his obedience to the Church and affection for St. Thomas may be assured that he is "being placed in the truth and the truth in him".

II. - Certitude in the Study of St. Thomas.

Certitude is nothing other than the determination of the intellect to one (*Certitudo nihil aliud est quam determinatio intellectus ad unum* (1)) or, in other words, it consists in the cognitive power's firmness in adhe-

(1) - In III Sent., d. 23, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 3.

ring to its object (*Certitudo proprie dicitur firmitas adhaesionis virtutis cognoscitivae in sum cognoscibile* (1)).

Certitude is an analogous term applied absolutely (*simpliciter*) and per prius to the act and determination of the intellect, and relatively (*secundum quid*) and per posterius to the object or to whatever else is said to be certain - as nature, virtue and art. The absolute and per prius certitude, which is the formal meaning, is itself taken according to two points of view so that the certitude resulting from the cause of certitude is called certitude absolutely (*simpliciter*), whereas the certitude resulting from the dispositions of the subject is only a relative one (*secundum quid*) (2).

Relatively and per posterius (according to the object), that knowledge is most certain which has the most certain object - *ratione suae naturae*. Thus, the certitude of metaphysics is greater than that of mathematics, and the certitude of mathematics is greater than that of natural doctrine; less certain still is the certitude of the moral sciences.

Absolutely and per prius (according to the cause) that knowledge is more certain which results from a more certain cause (*sic dicitur certius illud quod habet certiores causas* (3)); *tanto autem maior est certitudo, quanto est fortius quod determinationem causat* (In III Sent., d. 23,

(1) - In III Sent., d. 26, q. 2, a. 4.

(2) - IIaIIae, q. 4, a. 8.

(3) - IIaIIae, q. 4, a. 8.

q. 2, a. 2, scil. 3)). Thus in the intellectual virtues the habitus of principles is more certain than that of science; divine faith is more certain than any natural habitus; philosophers with strong intellects have comparatively greater certitude than those with less intellectual acumen.

Absolutely and per prius (though relatively and per posterius in relation to certitude according to the cause) that knowledge is more certain to which the intellect more completely attains (*sic dicitur esse certius quod plenius consequitur intellectus hominis* (1) according to man's general and individual dispositions. Thus man's greatest certitude is that based in sense knowledge, especially that of touch; according to the potency of our intellects, those objects with less actuality and intelligibility in themselves are more certain for us than those objects which have greater actuality and intelligibility in themselves; likewise, the teacher who by the clarity of his order and distinctions makes difficult matter more proportionate to the capacity of the student is, as a teacher, more certain for the student. Now, the certitude in its formal meaning as the delimitation of the intellect which a student has in studying the doctrine of St. Thomas is both absolutely (according to the cause) and relatively (which the intellect more fully attains) greater than that which he would have in studying the doctrine of any other teacher.

(1) - *Italiae*, qu. 4, a. 8.

1) - The certitude, first, is absolutely more certain. The reason for this is because the doctrine of St. Thomas has been accepted by the Church as her own, and as true and Catholic (*veridica et catholica*); now, in the doctrine of faith and morals the Church is infallible; therefore, the doctrine of St. Thomas partakes of this infallibility.

The greatest certitude is that of theological faith, in which we receive the truths that have been revealed by God and defined by the Church - "it is the Holy Spirit's pleasure and ours" (1). Next to this is the certitude of the faith of the Church or ecclesiastical certitude; this certitude we possess when we accept what the Church infallibly teaches in matters of faith and morals even when the truths proposed are not formally revealed. Now, the Church uses this prerogative of her infallibility in her teaching through the Encyclicals and laws directed to faith and morals. Therefore, since she has directed her teachers and students both in Canon Law and many Encyclicals that they are to follow the doctrine of St. Thomas, and since in so doing she cannot err, it is certain with ecclesiastical faith that the doctrine of St. Thomas is true.

Now, the cause of learning in mere human societies where the environment and customs play such great part in determining what the student

(1) - St. Luke, ch. 10, v. 16.

is to learn, is fallible; therefore, the student who is dependent on these natural customs cannot be certain that what he is learning is true; he does not have evidence and must accept what he is taught on faith; his is the weakest of certitudes. For the student who learns from St. Thomas the case is completely different. The cause of his certitude is the authority of the infallible Church.

From another point of view, the student of St. Thomas is also absolutely more certain. This is true because the intellect of St. Thomas was so strong and his fund of knowledge so broad and deep - more so than any other Doctor of the Church. Therefore, by accepting doctrine from St. Thomas the student is relying on an intellect much stronger than his own or of any other Doctor and capable of having greater determination to truth. To part with St. Thomas flavors of rashness; a person who disagrees with St. Thomas should bear in mind that the disagreement may be caused by the depth of St. Thomas's doctrine and his own intellectual weakness rather than an error in Thomas.

2) - The doctrine of St. Thomas is also relatively more certain for us because it is more in proportion to our intellect than that of Aristotle. As mentioned above, when speaking about the teacher, we saw that the intellect of the teacher possesses in act that knowledge to which the intellect of the student is in potency. It is for the teacher, then, to divide and distinguish his own concepts so that the knowledge will be in

proportion to the student. Thus, in the commentaries on Aristotle, St. Thomas divides and distinguishes the highly intelligible, actual and universal concepts of Aristotle so that our minds may attain to his thought.

In the same order, the teaching of the great commentators of St. Thomas, Cardinal Cajetan and John of St. Thomas, are more proportioned to the mind of the student than St. Thomas. The commentators by their explanations and distinctions bring the doctrine of St. Thomas more in proportion to inferior intellects. They are to be followed, however, only in so far as they lead the student to the mind of St. Thomas; their doctrine has not been approved by the church and their authority is merely human, based upon the attainment of evidence.

III. - Use of the Books of St. Thomas.

St. Thomas in lesson five of his commentary on the second book of the Metaphysics, states that what the student is accustomed to hear becomes for him the measure of truth. Since St. Thomas himself has been appointed as the Common Doctor of the Church, it is the intention of the Church that students should be accustomed to hear the words of St. Thomas; by hearing them the students will acquire a quasi-natural inclination towards them as the measure of truth; since the Church has declared that St. Thomas himself possesses the truth, this means that the mind of the student will be inclined to the truth with a quasi-natural inclination. From this it is a logi-

cal consequence that the most perfect manner of fulfilling the purposes of the Church and of acquiring good intellectual mores is to become acquainted with the writings of St. Thomas. It is only by reading St. Thomas that a student can become familiar with him.

In recent years the "Great Books" course has been introduced in many schools. Educators have realized that students have lost the richness of literature and world culture by receiving their training through books and lectures about great books and great thinkers. Therefore they have instituted courses in which the mind of the student is brought into direct contact with the minds of the men who have formed world thought. There has been the realization that when the student knows what A thought about what B thought, - what B thought about what C said ; - then there is the greatest probability that the student's understanding of what C said is garbled and erroneous.

It is important that there be in Catholic Schools a movement back to the "Great Books" of St. Thomas. If the student depends entirely on manuals, and if their teachers likewise depend on manuals, there is great danger that his mind is not being brought into contact with that of St. Thomas. The reason is that many such text-books are themselves based upon other text-books instead of on the works of St. Thomas himself so that a custom grows and continues, of teaching a philosophy "ad mentem Sancti

Thomae" - according to the mind of St. Thomas - which in reality is far from the mind of St. Thomas himself. One outstanding example of this, as mentioned before, is the very division of philosophy as given in most text-books of scholastic philosophy.

By using the works of St. Thomas the student becomes accustomed to the method, doctrine and principles of the Teacher. To convey his thought to another a man must use sensible signs. While the concepts of the teacher are similitudes of things in reality, words - written or spoken - are the signs of the concepts. Therefore, the best way to know what the concepts of the teacher are, is to go directly to the words of the teacher : his words are the signs of his concepts. In this way the mind of the student is applied directly to the mind of the teacher. So in the study of St. Thomas the best method in itself of knowing his doctrine is union with the mind of St. Thomas through the words of St. Thomas. In this manner we are sure of having a doctrine that is "cum mente Sancti Thomae" and not only "ad mentem" - "with" and not only "according to" the mind of Thomas. We may well apply the words of Pope Pius XI in the "Studiorum Ducem" speaking about knowledge of God not merely through scientific investigation but by the closest association with him to our study of St. Thomas :

For just as a man cannot really be said to know some distant country whose acquaintance is confined merely to a description of it, however accurate, but must have dwelt in it for some time - --".

-- so we cannot hope to know St. Thomas merely by what others say about him but must ourselves dwell with him in his writings.

Regarding the use of the books of St. Thomas the Popes have said :

A man can derive more profit from his books in one year than from a lifetime spent in pondering the philosophy of others (Pope John XIII).

Be careful, however, that the wisdom of Thomas be drawn from the spring itself or at any rate from streams which, flowing from that spring, still, in the certain and unanimous opinion of learned men, run pure and undefiled (Leo XIII, Aeterni Patris).

You see there is nothing which is more for the benefit of Christian faith than to explain accurately and faithfully (*probe et fideliter*) these works written under the inspiration of the Divine Spirit (Leo XIII. Letter to the General Minister of the Order of Friars Minor, A. S. S., v. 31, (1898), p. 26b).

As for sacred theology itself, it is our desire that the study of it be always illuminated by the light of the philosophy referred to, but in ordinary clerical seminaries, provided suitable teachers are available, there is no objection to the use of text books containing summaries of doctrines derived from the sources of Aquinas.

But for the more profound study of this science, as it ought to be in Universities and Colleges and in all Seminaries and Institutions which are empowered to grant academic degrees, it is of the first importance that the old system of lecturing on the actual text of the *Summa Theologica* - which should never have been allowed to fall into disuse - be revived; for the reason also that prolections on this book make it easier to understand and to illustrate the solemn decrees of the teaching Church and the acts passed in consequence (Pope Pius X, *Angelic Doctoris*).

Let them be persuaded (those who are engaged in teaching the higher studies in seminaries) that they will discharge their duty and fulfill our expectation when, after long and diligent perusal of his writings, (scripta eius diu multumque volutando), they begin to feel an intense devotion for the Doctor Aquinas and by their exposition of him succeed in inspiring their pupils with a like fervor and train them to kindle a similar zeal in others (Pope Pius XI, *Studiorum Ducem*).

From these statements the following conclusions may be drawn :

A) - The use of the text of St. Thomas is obligatory only for the one work, the *Summa Theologica*, in those schools mentioned by Pope Pius X :

It is our will and we hereby order and command that teachers of sacred theology in Universities, Academies, Colleges, Seminaries and Institutions enjoying by apostolic indult the privilege of granting academics degrees and doctorates in philosophy, use the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas as the text of their prelections and comment upon it in the Latin tongue, and let them take particular care to inspire their pupils with a devotion for it (*Angelici Doctoris*, p. 220).

B) - In other schools teaching theology and philosophy, text-books may be used. These summaries of the doctrine of St. Thomas must be derived from the sources themselves. Therefore, the criterion of a good text-book is its fidelity to the method, doctrine and principles of St. Thomas. The text-books must be an introduction to the works of St. Thomas himself; in other words, after a course of philosophy, in which the student

has used text-books, he should be acquainted with the philosophical works of St. Thomas so that for further study or reference he will be able to go directly to the Summa Theologica, the Summa Contra Gentiles, his commentary on the Peri Hermeneias, Posterior Analytics, Physics, De Anima, Ethics etc. with a feeling of familiarity and not with a sentiment of frustration as of one wandering in a strange country : "Man becomes accustomed to the things he hears".

C) - In the schools where text-books are used, the teachers must be "suitable" and "they will discharge their duty and fulfill our expectation when, after long and diligent perusal of his writings they begin to feel an intense devotion for the Doctor Aquinas...". This requires on the part of the teacher a learning based upon the writings of St. Thomas, not only theological but especially philosophical. As mentioned above, theology is necessary for the defence and manifestation of the faith; philosophy is necessary for the manifestation of theology; in other words, it is impossible to manifest the faith and theology without a thorough grounding in philosophy. It is impossible to be a theologian without being a philosopher. This can readily be seen in paging through the Summa Theologica and noting the many references given by St. Thomas to his philosophical works. One may know positive theology, the defined doctrines of the Church and the history of dogmas, and be unable to manifest them; it is this manifestation, so dependent on philosophy, which is the concern of St. Thomas in his Summa Theologica.

This need of a thorough acquaintance with the philosophical teaching of St. Thomas is brought out very sharply by the declaration of the Sacred Congregation of Studies (A. A. S., v. 6 (1914), p. 383-386) which presented twenty-four theses ("duly examined and presented to the Holy Father, and by his command") as containing the major principles and pronouncements of the saintly Doctor. The twenty-four theses comprise such doctrine as that of potency and act, essence and existence, substance and accidents, matter and form, quantity, the principle of individuation, place, the principle of organic and sensitive life, the human soul, the union of body and soul, the faculties of the soul, the theory of cognition, the proper object of the human intellect, the origin of our ideas, our manner of knowing, the will and free-will, the demonstrability of the existence of God and the five proofs for the existency of God, the divine essence, the nature and attributes of God, the knowledge of God, the will of God, the providence of God, predestination and reprobation, the relations of God with the world. Now, it is evident that the teaching of these doctrines, demanded by the Sacred Congregation of Studies by the command of the Holy Father, requires a complete and thorough knowledge of the philosophical works of St. Thomas, - if the teacher is to present to his students a clarification and manifestation of the twenty-four theses.

It cannot be denied that there are difficulties in using the text of St. Thomas. We may here mention three. The first concerns the available text. For instance the logical works and some of his commentaries of

Natural Philosophy are still to be had only in the Leonine Edition.

The second difficulty is the objection that it is necessary to know modern errors - and these errors are not found in St. Thomas. The answer to this objection is that it is necessary to have a foundation in St. Thomas in order to meet squarely these errors. It is impossible to study St. Thomas as one among many; he is the teacher who must first be listened to. Should all shades of truth and all manner of error be presented to the student on the same footing of importance as St. Thomas, the student would not become accustomed to the truth presented by St. Thomas. We might make this banal comparison : in the building of a house it is necessary to have screens to keep out the flies, locks on the door to keep out the thieves, and venetian blinds to keep out the sun - but these protections are added to the house after the house is built. So, too, it is first necessary to get a good and deep foundation in St. Thomas before we can hope to answer difficulties; with the foundation we will be in a position to manifest and defend our philosophy and theology; without it, our defense and manifestation can never be adequate.

The third difficulty arises from the language - Latin. The appropriate answer is that given by Father Sertillanges, o.p. in his book "La Vie Intellectuelle" : take six months off and learn it. Language is

a tool and instrument of the mind - and no more. One learns a language to use it, just as one learns the use of a hammer and saw to build; there is no meaning in learning to use a hammer just to use a hammer, - and so there is no real purpose in learning a language just to know word constructions. The complaint of many students today "Why learn latin" ? is very justified because, even though the study of a foreign language assists the knowledge of one's own tongue, it seems to the student that latin as taught is considered an end in itself and not a means to something more important. That is not the case for a student of St. Thomas. The Catholic student and any student who wishes to draw from the wisdom of St. Thomas should apply himself to learning the language he expressed himself in. When one sincerely strives to attain a goal, one willingly undergoes the difficulty attached to the means. So one who desires to know St. Thomas will willingly learn the instrument he used to convey his knowledge to us. For those unwilling to learn latin, this difficulty is in part overcome by the growing number of translations.

In conclusion to this chapter we can only repeat that the student in the formation of his intellectual mores will base his acceptance of the doctrine of St. Thomas on obedience to the authority of the Church, that he may be led on by his hope of obtaining knowledge or by his affection for St. Thomas. Thanks to this disposition, he will then listen to the words of St. Thomas so that they become familiar to him and, thus, an

added attachment of his will is directed to this doctrine. What he is accustomed to hear will be his rule of truth, and he will teach for it with a quasi-natural inclination - per modum naturae -, and it will be for him that which is more known. Then, just as a person who has been trained from youth to act virtuously will act naturally according to reason when nature, so the student, who from his youth has been trained intellectually in the truth to which St. Thomas attained, will be firmly established in that truth once his intellect is sufficiently developed to possess the evidence of his own accord.

The statement "fear the man of one book" is uncommonly true when that book is Thomas Aquinas for such a man is one "in whom the truth has been established and who has been established in the truth."

CONCLUSION

In the course of these pages we have pointed out a fact which is in practise realized by all who are concerned with education : "as a twig is bent, so shall it grow". In their theories, however, educators may lose sight of this fact. They stress the truth that the intellect must conform to reality and that the will cannot change reality. They strive to make their students understand lest the students become mere recording machines repeating lessons by rote. They endeavor to encourage their students "to think for themselves". All this is true and must be the goal of education. But what is lost sight of is the fact that the student does not as yet possess the knowledge which he is in the process of acquiring. He is still in no position to judge whether the doctrine is true or false. Whether he realizes it or not, he actually can have no more than belief. And that is what he should have. He must have trust, and put his confidence in the teacher upon whom he depends for knowledge of the reality he is to understand. This is the necessary prelude for understanding and having one's own thoughts.

Therefore, it is necessary for the student that his will enter into the determination of his intellect. He must begin by accepting the doctrine because it is good for him to do so. This every student does. He accepts what his teachers, his parents, his environment, his school

tradition offers him. Thus receiving what he is taught, he becomes accustomed to it and it becomes the measure of truth for him.

That is why in the all-important discipline of philosophy it is necessary to have as a teacher - a teacher of truth. There is probably no field of learning where custom and environment have such influence on students, - and there is no field comparable to philosophy which has had such dire results on the welfare of the world, - and which could have more influence in helping our age return to sanity.

To have this beneficial effect on the world means that students must go to a teacher who teaches the truth. But who is such a teacher? Fortunately, for the Catholic student it is not a question of trying for himself every road which might lead to truth. For him the road has been pointed out - and pointed out infallibly. The Church has told her students that the truth can be found in the "method, principles and doctrines" of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Therefore, for the student who obeys the authority of the Church there is only one course to follow: accept the doctrine of Aquinas because it is good to do so and become accustomed to his words and concepts. This is his one assured method of forming in himself that quasi-natural inclination to truth in which good intellectual mores consist. Then, after years of study, as he gradually becomes able to have his own evi-

dence of the truth, he will realize that what he now understand is what he has known somehow all along, and now that he is able to think for himself, he will recognize that "he had been established in the truth and the truth had been established in him".

St. Thomas often made the following request in prayer : "da mihi intelligendi acumen, retinendi capacitatem, addiscendi modum et facilitatem, interpretandi subtilitatem, loquendi gratiam copiosam". His prayer was granted. It is for us to examine and make our own the result of that prayer.

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