

## BLACKFRIARS

vinced to the end that our earliest records warrant the belief that St. Peter occupied among our Lord's disciples a peculiar position in which could be seen the germ of the Papacy no less than that of the episcopate in the apostolic college of the twelve. I even recollect his using language about the "Roman claims" being possibly already indicated in St. Mark's Gospel which I understood to mean (though he did not follow up the subject) that he thought it quite conceivable that the evangelist already had in his mind, when emphasizing the primacy of St. Peter, the Roman Church as its inheritor.

On the other hand, I very much doubt whether he would have expressed his faith in the authority of the Roman See in the words put into his mouth by Fr. Manson when he says that von Hügel "never doubted that the voice of God had that one single utterance in the world." Beyond doubt he held that in the Roman Church Christianity (and therefore religion) was presented in its fullest and richest form, affording opportunities for the spiritual life which no other religious fellowship could offer; so that to entertain the thought of abandoning it for any other communion was for himself inconceivable. He was full of *pietas Romana*. One remembers his dismay when George Tyrrell for awhile played with the idea of returning to Anglicanism. It was with humorous exaggeration that Tyrrell said he knew von Hügel would rather see him an atheist than an Anglican; but certainly the Baron could only envisage such a change of confession as a definitely *downward* step. Yet he "would not cross the room" to make a proselyte to Roman Catholicism, any more than he would repel from it anyone who genuinely found any other religious room too strait for him. No one can appreciate von Hügel's theology aright who does not realize the importance in it of the conception of a graded series of revelations, each embodied in a religious organization, which he found in—or rather read into—Cardinal de Lugo, but which, though it may not have been entitled to appeal to that divine's authority, may none the less have been a valuable contribution to religious thought.

I am, Sir, Yours etc.,

CLEMENT C. J. WEBB.

Fr. Aelfric Manson, O.P., replies:

Professor Webb finds a common bond between von Hügel and Lord Halifax in the fact that, apparently, some Anglicans felt that von Hügel would have been more spiritually at home as an Anglican, and some Catholics felt that Lord Halifax would have been more spiritually at home in the Church. A curious link indeed! For, in reality, von Hügel was very much at home in the Catholic Church and became more so as the years went by. His spiritual fellowship was with the Catholic Saints and his

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major work is the biography of one of them. His spiritual life was begun by a Dominican and fully orientated by the Abbé Huvelin. He gladly allowed his daughter to become a Carmelite nun. His principal prayer was before the Blessed Sacrament; there was his home. As for Lord Halifax every Catholic would certainly have held that his true home was the Catholic Church, for it is the true home of all men. But no Catholic would have held this merely on account of Lord Halifax's peculiar religious position. That good man would have had to leave his dream world and come down to reality before his mind could have understood the Catholic Church. *Pietas romana* is dogmatic piety.

Does Professor Webb remind us that von Hügel "would not cross a room to make a proselyte" in order to suggest that in the Baron's mind truth was relative? Proselyte and its verb are now unpleasant words. And if all that is meant is that the Baron refrained from aggressive thrusting of the truth into unwilling ears, we can admit his virtue. Or, if his inaction merely signifies a sensitiveness towards holiness in non-Catholics, we can learn from him. If, however, it is suggested that he was indifferent as to whether a man possessed the whole truth or only its broken fragments, the charge is refuted by the fact of his own writings. They are his apostolate; to each man his own vocation. Taken as a whole, their serious blemishes not forgotten, they form a magnificent defence of the Faith.

I think Professor Webb is a little hard on the Scholastics. True it is that they went to sleep for about a century after the death of John of St. Thomas. But it was sleep, not death, as their vigorous revival in the 19th century and their present power well proves. And can we be so complacent about the philosophical riches of the last three hundred years? Doubtless, new problems have been raised, and discoveries made. But on the whole it is surely a tenable view that the direction of philosophy initiated by Descartes has ended in a blind alley.

Professor Webb concludes his letter by remarking (a) that he doubts whether von Hügel "would have expressed his faith in the authority of the Roman See in the words" which I "put into his mouth," i.e., that "he never doubted that the voice of God had that one single utterance in the world"; (b) that to understand his theology one must understand his "conception of a graded series of revelations"; and (c) that this conception is a "valuable contribution to religious thought."

To this I would reply: My statement about von Hügel's faith indeed includes his acceptance of the authority of the Holy See but explicitly referred to the direct object of his faith, the Revelation of God guarded and expounded by the Church. My complete statement made that clear. Von Hügel believed, quite

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simply, in one God, one Lord, one Faith. Further, he disliked assumptions; and the idea of a "graded series of revelations" is an astounding assumption. One wonders what Professor Webb can mean by "revelation." An utterance of God, or a discovery of man? A natural "find" or a supernatural gift? Protestantism attempted to justify itself as a return to the one pure and primitive revelation. Professor Webb's theory provides a far simpler solution. Whether it is "a valuable contribution to religious thought" is another matter. I say "Professor Webb's theory" because, although von Hügel was intensely interested in the strivings and attainments of man which, in varying degrees, point towards man's divine destiny, and although his terminology was not always precise, he was too clear-headed ever to confuse the natural with the supernatural. Besides he accepted the Encyclical *Pascendi* which dealt with the mode of thought implicit in the theory of Professor Webb. That theory was not his.

## REVIEWS

### THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

LA DOCTRINE DE LA REDEMPTION CHEZ SAINT THOMAS. By L. Hardy. (Desclée de Brouwer; 12 frs.)

A necessary book. The richness, depth and beauty of St. Thomas's thought regarding the Atonement are too little appreciated; and still less is his doctrine sufficiently taught and preached. Here it will be found set out, largely in St. Thomas's own words which have been intelligently selected, arranged and strung together with intelligent, if not always subtle, comments. The author disclaims originality, but his work is none the less valuable on that account.

The aim he first had in writing it was to make a brief comparison of St. Thomas's thought on the subject with that of St. Anselm. He soon found that the richness of the former necessitated a larger book than was originally intended. The bulk of the present book is therefore, as the title implies, an exposition of the Thomist doctrine. But it is preceded by a brief (too brief, perhaps, to be altogether just) summary of St. Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo?* and is followed by a comparison of the two. M. Hardy recognizes that Thomas did far more than develop and perfect the speculation of Anselm, and that comparison of the two involves, in many respects, a contrast. But we do not think he has realized how great that contrast really is: so great, indeed, that the Thomist treatment—notwithstanding the inclusion of many features taken over from Anselm—is almost a radical inversion of the Anselmian.