

## CARDINAL CAJETAN RENAISSANCE MAN

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IT WAS A PORTENT of things to come that St. Thomas Aquinas' principal achievement—a brilliant synthesis of faith and reason—aroused feelings of irritation and confusion in most of his contemporaries. But whatever their personal sentiments, it was altogether too imposing, too massive, to be ignored. Those committed to established ways of thought were startled by the revolutionary character of his theological entente. William of la Mare, a representative of the Augustinian tradition, is typical of those who instinctively attacked St. Thomas because of the novel sound of his ideas without taking time out to understand him. And the Dominicans who rushed to the ramparts to vindicate a distinguished brother were, as often as not, too busy fighting to be able even to attempt a stone by stone examination of the citadel they were defending. Inevitably, it has taken many centuries and many great minds to measure off the height and depth of his theological and philosophical productions—but men were ill-disposed to wait.

Older loyalties, even in Thomas' own Order, yielded but slowly, if at all, and in the midst of the confusion and hesitation new minds were fashioning the *via moderna*. Tempier and Kilwardby's official condemnation in 1277 of philosophy's real or supposed efforts to usurp theology's function made men diffident of proving too much by sheer reason. Scotism now tended to replace demonstrative proofs with dialectical ones, and with Ockham logic and a spirit of analysis decisively supplant metaphysics and all attempts at an organic fusion between the two disciplines. As Copleston has graphically described it, faith was left hanging in mid-air. And despite the fact that the Avignon Report on Ockham's writings had found Nominalism, or better Terminism, at variance with the Faith, and his theory of intuitive knowledge an open door to scepticism, he, almost as much as St. Thomas was, in point of fact, a Common Doctor in Christendom. If Catholics in good standing could hold philosophical tenets hostile to the Faith, what was left but superstition or scepticism?

As if to make matters worse there was a tenacious anti-Thomistic tradition within the Dominican Order itself—men like James of Metz and Durand of Saint-Pourçain who would follow Thomas only as far as he seemed to adhere to their real Master—Aristotle. When the first truly great interpreter of St. Thomas appears, John Capreolus (1380-1444), a commentator interested in St. Thomas for his own sake and not for polemic, his voice could hardly be heard above the din of partisan squabbling among the Thomists, old-guard Aristotelians, Augustinians, Albertists, Scotists and Nominalists. Capreolus was, indeed, the harbinger of a great scholastic revival, but when it came, a divided, warring Christendom would be already reaping the bitter harvest of Scholasticism's earlier decline. And while the Medieval synthesis of faith and reason was being effectively jettisoned by those who should have been its most ardent champions—the philosophers and theologians of the Universities—a profound cultural revolution was reaching its climax and transforming the face of Europe.

### *Christ, Not Christology*

Italy was stirring to new life. Many of the Latin classics were being spectacularly rediscovered in the musty libraries of Europe's ancient monasteries—the plays of Plautus, Tacitus' history of Rome, some of Pliny's letters. At the same time there had been a veritable flood of Greek scholar-refugees into Southern Europe, fleeing before the advancing armies of the Ottoman Turks. Scholasticism was to have a very belated share in this intellectual growth. Too often it became an island hermetically sealed off from the swirling seas of revolutionary change which lashed against its walls. Sterile debate, technical Latin that was descending to new depths of barbarism, a benighted contempt for the new experimental sciences and critical scholarship, all suggested the early demise of an organism that to all appearances had out-lived its usefulness. Scholasticism became synonymous with decadence, and the best minds, often lay minds, had nothing but loathing for it. Some of the humanists confined themselves exclusively to the pagan classics, but others like Erasmus emphasized positive theology, a critical study of the Scriptures in their original tongues, an assiduous reading of the Fathers. Just as the secular humanist longed for the restoration of the Roman Republic, men of genuine religious sympathy, and Erasmus claimed to be one, worked towards the renewal of primitive, Apostolic Christianity. Away with the man-made accretions which smothered true Christian life—dogmatic theology, asceticism, monasticism, relics, pilgrimages! Erasmus wanted Christ, not Christology.

With the potential dragon-slayers thus preoccupied with humane studies, and often indifferent to any and all philosophical systems, Neo-Platonism, pantheism, Stoicism, Epicureanism and a renewed Averroism infiltrated into Europe from the Muslim world, or came up from hiding, almost unnoticed and unchallenged.

This intellectual blight was only one of many major problems troubling Renaissance Christendom. The growth of national spirit was becoming increasingly totalitarian in its demands upon the Church; Leo X's Concordat of 1516 with France was the greatest surrender of direct control the papacy has ever made.<sup>1</sup> Conciliarism still showed tremendous reserves of vitality—Basle and Pisa (1511) showed that—and it posed as an ever present threat to papal authority and an obstacle to the desperately needed reform of Christian life on all levels. Widespread immorality among prelates, priests, nobles and lay-folk; an appalling clerical ignorance (a memorial to Julius II contained the disturbing news that barely two per cent of the clergy understood the Latin in their liturgical books); scandalous ecclesiastical disorders with financial abuses in the Curia; pluralism and absenteeism among the prelates and benefice holders: these were but some of the abuses that cried out for correction. Cardinal Campeggio wryly remarked that an energetic benefice hunter was often so successful that he needed an alphabetical index to find his way among them. Add, finally, to all this, the growing apathy of the Christian princes to a crusade against the Turks, and yet the need to halt the Muslim advance had never been more urgent.

### *Friend of Erasmus*

It has been necessary to mention this general historical background to Cajetan's life (1469-1534) because, unlikely as it seems, at one time or another during his public career each of these besetting problems became his personal responsibility and he made significant contributions toward the solution of most of them.

Hubert Jedin, who is writing a definitive history of the Council of Trent, has remarked of the awakened interest in the first-hand examination of the Scriptures and the Fathers: "Positive theology was on the march, and with it flowed the ideals of the ancient Church like a broad tributary into the stream of reform." Cajetan's greatness consists largely in the fact that he saw the immense potential value of the new positive theology and of the entire humanist movement, of which it formed a part, to revitalize a decadent Scholasticism and, indeed, to reform the whole Christian Church. Just as St. Albert and St. Thomas had baptized Aristotle in the 13th century, Cajetan, not

ashamed to be considered a Renaissance man, was largely successful in initiating a fusion of Thomism with the New Learning—a process which was to find perhaps its most complete expression in the Spanish Thomist school.<sup>2</sup>

It is of incalculable importance that Cajetan wrote the first systematic commentary on the *Summa* of St. Thomas. But there are other qualities about this commentary which are too often overlooked.<sup>3</sup> Determined that his commentary would not be a futile rehash of other authors or a mere roll-call of citations from authority—the sort of sham scholarship that had alienated the humanists—he strove above all for originality and sound argumentation.<sup>4</sup> In his Prologue to the *Prima Pars* Cajetan had stated his lofty code in unequivocal terms: “What I say here and in all places is circumscribed by the testimony of reason.” It was a promise he kept. Those who too readily complain that Cajetan did not imitate the limpid simplicity of Aquinas should evaluate the commentary in the light of Cajetan’s own intention. That we still find the commentary so helpful is a tribute to Cajetan’s genius as a thinker and a pedagogue, but it is only fair to remember that he was writing with the needs and the tastes of a particular class of readers in mind. That he was not entirely unsuccessful in his efforts to woo the humanists can be seen from a letter (ca. 1521) of lavish praise sent by Erasmus to Cajetan after he had read his *opuscula* on the Eucharist, Confession and the invocation of the saints. One can only speculate what might have been the benefits to Christendom if Erasmus, who was all sail and no rudder, had fallen under Cajetan’s influence at an earlier time. Prior to 1517 no voice spoke with greater authority in Europe than the voice of Erasmus.<sup>5</sup>

In the same Prologue to his commentary on the *Prima Pars* Cajetan indicates yet another goal. Scotus with his subtleties and pseudo-logic has attempted to undermine nearly every word in St. Thomas’ *Prima Pars* and he must be answered. Here again, uninformed critics have accused Cajetan of obfuscating rather than clarifying St. Thomas’ text. In certain instances this may well be true, but Cajetan was, after all, defending St. Thomas from the attacks of the *Doctor Subtilis*. Nor should we forget Cajetan’s own acute observation that St. Thomas’ *Summa* is suited to beginners not because it is easy to learn, but because it is free of superfluities and repetitions, and employs “a most beautiful order.”

### ***Scientific Exegesis***

Though Cajetan did not devote himself to his famous Scripture commentaries until the last ten years of his life, they form a unity

with his lifetime program of effecting a reconciliation of Scholasticism and the New Learning.<sup>6</sup> By 1524 when Cajetan completed his first Scriptural work, the *Jentacula*, a commentary on certain basic texts from the New Testament, the Protestant Revolt had made a study of the Bible according to the critical apparatus of the humanists an absolute necessity. Cajetan had the vision and wisdom to see that the theological polemics were to center around the interpretation of key Scripture texts. A recent Protestant study of Luther, *The Revolt of Martin Luther* (1957), by the late Dr. Fife of Columbia University, states categorically (p. 302) that it was Scholasticism more than Church abuses which Luther wished to sweep away. Positive theology was the new weapon being used with devastating effect by the Reformers. Seeing the need of the moment, Cajetan, though one of the world's truly great metaphysicians and a most devoted champion of Scholasticism's masterpiece, the *Summa*, became in a matter of two or three years a skilled exponent of the new critical exegesis. It is regrettable that most Catholic theologians, believing that only the Vulgate could serve as a basis for Catholic exegesis, refused to follow his lead, for the confusion and petty bickering among the Church's controversialist theologians prior to Trent greatly weakened the Catholic cause:

For some four hundred years technical theology had been synonymous with scholasticism, that is, the use in the study of dogma of the dialectical method evolved in the twelfth century. Now the turn of the fifteenth century witnessed the rise by its side, or rather in conflict with it, of positive theology based on the study of the Scriptures, the Fathers and the Councils in the original texts. The old was still in conflict with the new, for no satisfactory compromise had been reached at the moment when the innovators began to point new weapons at traditional scholasticism as well as at the ancient Church. While still in process of transformation theology saw itself compelled to defend not only its own existence and its methods but likewise the faith of which it had the guardianship. This accounts for the hesitation as to whether, and to what extent, one might tactically meet the opponents in the method of argumentation as well as for the contrast between the "modern" and the "conservative" theologians which gave to the Catholic defence a certain air of incoherence.<sup>7</sup>

The true scholar, in a very real sense, never leaves his childhood behind. The quest for discovery and joy in discovering are a part of his very self. Critical exegesis' near infinite potentialities had not been fully tried before, and the needs of the Church made the attempt imperative. If God gave him the years and the strength, Cajetan the scholar would explore the entire Bible with his new compass not out of a love of simple novelty but for the sake of new truths to be

placed at Holy Mother Church's disposal. *Mark* was commented on in twenty days; *Luke* in less than two months; *John*, on which he lavished the most exacting care, within four months. *Luke* was completed on the 25th of January; *John* was begun the very same day! The haste and the enthusiasm are obvious, and the enthusiasm never flagged until *Isaias*, chapter III, verse 8, despite crushing burdens and ever worsening health. The needs of the Church required it, and the spell of fascination remained unbroken.

Cajetan became, then, a most enthusiastic convert to critico-scientific exegesis—a method entirely congenial to his scholarly nature. Aware of the new exegetical treasure that now lay open to the examination of Scripture scholars and which had been denied to the Fathers of the Church, he confides to his readers his regrets that the Fathers were restricted to commenting on the arbitrary creations of mere translators, rather than the original texts. Cajetan saw himself as one beginning the process of scriptural exposition afresh. He did not, to be sure, reject out of hand the spiritual and allegorical interpretations of the Fathers, but, in an age less impressed with arguments from authority, it seemed best to him first to find with all possible exactness what the Scriptures said and to build from there. Cajetan was only too keenly aware how the recent intemperate exploitation of the allegorical and spiritual senses of Scripture had placed Catholic exegesis in ill-repute. This alone, not to mention his natural preferences as a skilled metaphysician, is sufficient to explain why he handled the commentaries of the Fathers, which abounded in allegorical and moral accommodations, a bit gingerly. In his own words:

If we come across some fresh interpretation which, though new, yet squares with the text under discussion, with the rest of the Bible and with the Church's teachings, though differing from the torrent of the Fathers, we, as critics, must in fairness be prepared to render to every one his due. Holy Scripture alone is so authoritative that when its authors say a thing is so, we believe them. "When I read other writers," says St. Augustine, "I do not accept what they say simply because they say it—no matter how holy or learned they may be." Let no one, then, reject some fresh interpretation merely on the grounds that it does not square with what the early Fathers have held. Let him rather examine the passage in question, bearing in mind, too, its context. If he then finds that the fresh interpretation harmonizes with it, let him give thanks to God who has not limited interpretation of the Bible to the early Fathers but has left Scripture to interpret Scripture, yet always under the interpretation of the Catholic Church.<sup>8</sup>

Pere Vosté finds this declaration of Cajetan's a bit too sweeping and too audacious. Father Hugh Pope revels in it. Yet Vosté cautions

that it should not be interpreted in too rigid a fashion. Cajetan's operative principles as an exegete are quite sound, and when he speaks of departing from the Fathers he has principally their accommodated interpretations in mind. This becomes especially clear when we examine Cajetan's sober expositions of the New Testament Parables, passages where the Fathers had often allowed their allegorizing tendencies full rein. Soon Maldonatus and Estius, exegetes, and Petavius, historian-theologian, were all to show distaste for Patristic allegories, and Petavius in particular was not slow to point out the imperfections in their commentaries—the prejudices of their time and place, lack of erudition or the tools of scholarship.

The specific and frequent citation of the Fathers would have hampered the free-flow of Cajetan's commentary. It would have consumed precious time a sickly Cajetan did not have to spare and would have raised numberless petty conflicts in interpretation which would have made cumbersome a commentary he was determined would be concise and uncomplicated.<sup>9</sup> Padre Colunga, like Vosté a distinguished Dominican exegete of the modern era, exonerates Cajetan from all blame, saying that the Fathers need only be followed when they act as organs of the Church's tradition. Besides, Colunga assures us, Cajetan's excellent theological background was sufficient insurance that he would not fall into serious error while plotting his own course. Still, one can hardly help agreeing with Vosté that a thorough knowledge and use of the Fathers together with later commentators of prominence must always remain the endowments of an ideally equipped exegete. Further, as we can easily see in Vosté's summaries of Cajetan's New Testament commentaries, his failure to keep the Fathers as constant guides caused him to advance a number of extraordinary interpretations which could certainly not be held today.<sup>10</sup>

Yet, even if Cajetan was at times a bit too self-reliant, it is important to bear in mind that exegetes in Cajetan's day felt much freer about expressing personal viewpoints than they do today. Fellow theologians and the great Universities rather than any official organs of the Church were accustomed to put extremists in their place. Exegesis was passing through a confused period of transition where the traditional-dogmatic interpretations were trying to find some rapprochement with the findings of the new historico-literary scholarship—a process which is still going on. Finally, the expression of the relative dignity and probative power of the different theological fonts was only then finding a precise formulation—a tendency of which Cano's *De locis theologicis* is the outstanding example.

When his commentaries were published, they aroused a storm of

protest and suspicion, particularly from men of his own Order like Catharinus and Cano, neither of whom was ever disposed to mince words.<sup>11</sup> The criticisms were not entirely undeserved, but essentially his contemporaries failed to appreciate the fact that the new positive theology was giving to the Protestant propagandists a strong tactical advantage which they had no right to enjoy. Scholastic formulae were now obsolete weapons. Undeniably the disputes were theological, but unless Catholic theologians reappraised the founts of Revelation, Scripture and Tradition, they would be cutting the air. The adaptability of viewpoint, the zest and skill which Cajetan displayed in his exegesis give him the title to be considered one of the greatest Scripture scholars of the Church in the six centuries from St. Thomas to Pere La-grange.<sup>12</sup>

### *A Powerful Friend*

All that has been said until now concerns Cajetan's accomplishments as a theologian and exegete. Yet Cajetan as the Dominican Order's thirty-eighth Master General proved to be one of her greatest leaders and administrators (1508-1518). There had been little to suggest this latent power to be a successful leader of men either in his appearance or in his past record. As a child he had been pious and bookish, avoiding the games of boys his age. As though to compensate for his intellectual gifts, he had, to state the matter plainly, a small, ugly body and chronically weak health.<sup>13</sup> While pursuing his theological studies at Bologna as a young Dominican he was forced to return to the priory at Gaeta, his birthplace, to rebuild his strength. His personality, too, was hardly prepossessing. Known as Cajetan the Laconic, he was a man of few words and these were always uncomfortably to the point.<sup>14</sup> Finding it impossible to make small talk, he had little time for those who could. Flavio, his priest-secretary, an intimate for seventeen years, reports that his master had to fight against a short temper all his life.<sup>15</sup> It seems very possible then that Cajetan, despite the unanimous vote, would not have been elected Master General at all without the enthusiastic backing of his patron Carafa, the Order's Cardinal Protector.<sup>16</sup>

When an elective chapter of the Order was held in 1508 on the death of the Master General, Jean Cl  r  e, it was Carafa who presided. Sebastien de Olmedo, a contemporary chronicler, reports that the Cardinal had to resort to both pleas and threats before the electors finally consented to choose his protege. Cajetan was too young (40), painfully nondescript in appearance, and better suited, it seemed, for the classroom than for government. But the overbearing presence

of the reform-minded Cardinal Archbishop of Naples eventually silenced all their objections. With bluntness Sebastien de Olmedo records that Cajetan's election was canonical but not spontaneous. If this be true, one is tempted to rejoice that in this instance the Dominican democratic process was not allowed to function undisturbed!

As Master General Cajetan tried to have the numerous ordinances which had been added in a haphazard fashion to the primitive Constitutions codified and made an integral part of the Order's legislation. Some of his modifications were adopted by three successive Chapters, the last in 1518, under Loaysa, but it was hardly all that Cajetan had desired. Seeing the great potentialities for the growth of the Church made possible by the new over-seas empires of Spain and Portugal, he encouraged these two nations to set up and develop Dominican missions at Goa and Santo Domingo. Before long this share in the missionary growth of the Church will bring him some consolation for the defection of much of Germany under Luther—a loss he as Legate to Germany was powerless to prevent. By including the first feast of St. Joseph in the Dominican calendar he added another page to the Order's glorious history of devotion to Mary's spouse. But it is in his role as a reformer that the Order owes its greatest debt to Cajetan. There was a crying need for radical reform measures in all the Mendicant Orders. The Dominican Masters General, unable to bring the Order back to strict observance by legislative fiat, encouraged and protected the fervent convents by banding them together into Congregations ruled by a Vicar General and independent of the authority of local Provincials, often enough hostile to the reform spirit. Cajetan himself had lived and studied in the houses of observance belonging to the Congregation of Lombardy, and saw how fidelity to the Rule and Constitutions, and a high grade of intellectual life, flourished together.

In his ten years as Master General Cajetan partially realized a carefully laid-out plan to restore the entire Order to essential observance. He patronized the reform Congregations; he insisted that ordinands, confessors, Bachelors, and Masters in the Order be searchingly examined and that those found incompetent be rejected or demoted. Avoiding the mistake of his predecessors in multiplying commands they should have known would not be carried out, he threw all his energies towards restoring the Order's two-fold ideal of the common life and study. "Protect these two principles of the common life and study and our Order will be reformed with ease," he assured the delegates to the General Chapter held at Naples in 1515. He did

not forget the Order's penitential practices, but here he proceeded with much greater caution and acted decisively only when circumstances seemed favorable. Though Cajetan's biographer, Flavio, is certainly exaggerating when he claims that at the end of his generalate St. Dominic could only have found complete satisfaction with the Order he had founded, remarkable improvements had doubtless been accomplished. As the initiator of Scholasticism's late Renaissance revival, Cajetan must have derived especial consolation from the brilliant flowering of Dominican intellectual life that took place in Spain during his generalate.

With the Mendicant Orders in a period of decline and the awe-inspiring Julius II dead, the prelates attending the Fifth Lateran Council (1512-1517), seized the opportunity to press for the revocation of their special privileges of exemption from episcopal authority. Cajetan could not deny the widespread abuses which were a source of constant scandal, but he did remind Leo X of his own Reform Preachers with their promise of better days to come, and helped persuade the Pope to permit only minor changes in the Mendicants' legal status.<sup>17</sup> This intercession helped to win him the title "Father of the Mendicants."

### *A Puritan in Babylon*

As a Cardinal (1517-1534) Cajetan again proved a strong advocate of reform. His frugal living and busy schedule were a rebuke to those prelates whose presence at the Curia was solely for ornamental purposes. They felt the sting too, and considered this austere friar peculiar and arrogant.<sup>18</sup> Cajetan is generally regarded as deserving the major share of the credit for the election of the high-minded Adrian VI to the chair of Peter. In a memorial to this Pope Cajetan proposed: (1) that the cardinals at the Curia should resign their external dioceses and should have a fixed income to be derived from the contributions of the countries of which they were the protectors; (2) bishops were to be chosen by representatives of the secular clergy; (3) the age of ordination should be raised to thirty;<sup>19</sup> (4) all conventuals, i.e., the relaxed branches of the Mendicant Orders, were to be suppressed. This could hardly have been pleasant reading for the more worldly of the cardinals and bishops. So, not long after his election, Adrian VI was persuaded by the cardinals that Cajetan should be sent as Papal Legate to Hungary—to help cope with the latest Turkish threat, they said, but perhaps it was, as some thought, to isolate the "foreign" Pope from such a warm supporter and resourceful strategist.

Cajetan's famous encounter with Martin Luther in an earlier embassy to Germany (1518) to raise funds for a Crusade against the Turks, has been told in so many places and in so many ways, that it does not bear repetition now. Suffice it to say that Cajetan's failure to bring Luther to submission was due partly to the heresiarch's own irrational intransigence and partly to powerful political forces beyond the Legate's control. In his meeting with Luther (we have Luther's acknowledgement of it), he showed the greatest courtesy and patience.

The query of the Protestant historian Tawney concerning Luther: "Is emotion really an adequate substitute for reason and rhetoric for law?" has, after all, never been satisfactorily answered by the Reformation's adherents. He might also have added that Luther and Cajetan were like pawns in an international game of power politics, with the Pope and Frederick the Wise both more interested in the imperial succession than in theology.

### *A Taste for Battle*

The facts of Cajetan's busy life give more than one hint that he found skirmishes and battles a highly exhilarating experience. He was redoubtable in scholastic disputations, and if we may believe Flavio, whenever a "match" was announced people flocked to see the spectacle. He was always very courteous to his opponent but in complete self-possession and quite devastating in his dialectic. As a young professor at Padua he led a two-pronged attack against Trombetta and the Scotists on the one side, and Pomponazzi and the Averroists on the other. His metaphysical masterpiece, a commentary on St. Thomas' *De Ente et Essentia*, was, in fact, written against the Franciscan Trombetta. When by the evil inspiration of Louis XII of France and the Emperor Maximilian, an illegitimate "ecumenical council" had been convened at Pisa, Cajetan was not content to begin writing a skillful tract in defense of papal authority which drove that stronghold of Conciliarism, the Sorbonne, to impotent rage.<sup>20</sup> He also sent two commissioners to Pisa itself to stiffen the opposition of the Dominican priory of St. Catherine the Martyr and, as far as possible, to win back the clergy to the support of Julius II. When the news reached Cajetan in Rome that his friars, mounted on the roofs, had beaten back with tiles and rocks the attempt to take the Dominican church and priory by violence, and by the example of their military prowess had actually alienated many Pisans from the Schism, he must have felt the deep satisfaction of the successful tactician. Yet he always kept his very great skill as a polemicist under tight control. Thus in his later polemics against the Protestants, and

they were relatively few, because, according to Flavio, he thought Luther should be left to the obscurity of his German forests and swamps rather than be talked about, he refrained from that scurrility in which too many of his contemporaries excelled.

### *Caritas Christi Urget Nos*

It has often been maintained that if the Council of Trent had been held in 1520 rather than 1545 the Protestant defection might have been stopped in its tracks. Was Cajetan as blind as most of his contemporaries when he advised both Leo X and Clement VII against holding a Council? It should be remembered, however, that Alexander, Cajetan and Campeggio, the Church's best informed advisers, all concurred in this judgment. They urged drastic reforms, under papal initiation, as a substitute, because they feared that a Council would mean Conciliarism and additional Schism. Then, too, none knew better than they the power of the enemies of reform in the Papal Curia. They would have to be disposed of first. Absolutely speaking a Council was to be desired, but in the given circumstances it seemed the part of prudence to explore other means.

One alternate means that appealed especially to Clement VII, driven to distraction by the spectre of a Council, was to make the most generous concessions possible to the innovators. Cajetan was commissioned to help determine the measurements of this "gift-package." His proposals (July, 1530) are startling. He recommended for Germany the concession of a married clergy, and Communion in both kinds. Further, throughout the Church the precepts regarding the reception of the sacraments, holy days of obligation and fasting were no longer to bind under pain of serious sin out of deference to the Protestant attitude towards the *ius humanum*. He also felt there was no need for a formal recantation by the Protestant theologians or a formal profession of faith from the Estates if one and all simply gave assurance that they believed all that the Church universal believes. Cajetan was determined to sin by an excess of charity rather than of severity. Inflexible in the face of metaphysical aberrations, he was gentleness itself towards human inadequacy and weakness.

We might discuss Cajetan's contributions to economic theory or develop Mayer's claim for Cajetan that he was the precursor of modern moral psychology and of the reform of the penal code, but enough has been said to indicate something of the man's stature. Even in the Dominican Order's period of moral decline she showed her capacity to produce apostolic men who met the needs of the time. The lesson should not be lost, however, that Cajetan's Dominican life was nur-

tured in houses of reform, in isolation from those friars who were living neither the letter nor the spirit of the Dominican Constitutions.

Cajetan approached death in the bewildering and disheartening time that lay between Wittenberg and Trent. The renewed vitality the Church displayed in the Counter Reformation and the prolific achievements of the Catholic Baroque culture were a Promised Land he could only glimpse dimly from afar, if at all. In his commentary on Luke XVIII, 8: "But yet the Son of man, when he cometh, shall he find, think you, faith on earth?" we see how old-age, sickness and the dismal scene around him set an almost despondent tone:—

This passage makes me apprehensive that the falling away of Christian faith, of which we are the witness—something not in its initial stages but far advanced—will not be remedied but will continue to spread. I am not a Prophet, nor am I the son of a Prophet, but we seem to be traveling head-long towards the fulfillment of this text. A great part of the world is certainly Mohammedan and the small part left to Christians is filled with so many heresies, schisms and abuses that the number of true believers now seems very small. Now I call true believers those who profess the Christian faith both in words and deeds.

But Cajetan did not abandon his projects and wait in inactive gloom for the end. He worked courageously on, knowing that out of the barrenness of human futility a never-failing Providence had often wrought in the Church of God the miracle of a Second Spring.<sup>21</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Philip Hughes, *A History of the Church*, Volume III, p. 446.

<sup>2</sup> As the historian Philip Hughes expresses it ". . . he (Cajetan) is indeed a second Aquinas, bringing into synthesis humanism and Aristotelianism as the thirteenth-century doctor had brought together Aristotelianism and the theology of St. Augustine. . . . Here is the wisdom of St. Thomas given new life, and speaking to the Renaissance in an idiom it can understand. Here at last among the scholastic theologians was a great thinker, sensitive to all the life of his time, his work free from all those faults which drew upon his profession the wrath of Erasmus and the mockery of Rabelais" (*ibid.*, pp. 476-7). It must be noted, however, by way of qualification, that Cajetan's acceptance of the "new learning" was not nearly so deliberate and thoroughgoing as we see it in the case of the Spanish Dominican Francisco Vitoria, founder of the Thomist school at Salamanca. Vitoria was consciously a humanist and he made the Fathers and Sacred Scripture, though without rejecting his scholastic background, the very basis of his theological teaching. Vitoria's pupil, Melchior Cano, O.P., could, in fact, criticize Cajetan's style for its "innate obscurity" because he found it less literary than his tastes might have liked. In his letters and the prologues to his commentaries, etc., Cajetan showed, however, that he could ape Cicero with the best of them.

<sup>3</sup> It was in 1484 that the Dominican Order had directed its Lectors to use

the *Summa* as their basic theological text in place of Peter Lombard's *Book of the Sentences*. It is of great significance that when Cajetan began his commentary on the *Summa* he approached it precisely as a textbook rather than as a supplementary work; cfr. Copleston, *History of Philosophy*, Vol. III, p. 344.

<sup>4</sup> Though it is hardly possible to evaluate it here, we can at least indicate Gilson's provocative appraisal of Cardinal Cajetan:—"The commentary of Cajetan on the *Summa theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas . . . is still generally considered as the standard interpretation of Thomism. In fact, Cajetanism has largely superseded Thomism in the teaching of the schools; Cajetan's own doctrine is much more Aristotelian than that of Thomas Aquinas"; *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, p. 800. "(The) attempt to purify Thomism from Thomas Aquinas by replacing the metaphysics of the Angelic Doctor with that of a moderate Aristotelianism was headed for a brilliant future; its triumph will last as long as that of Cajetan"; *ibid.*, p. 471. In his article "Cajetan et l'Exirte," *Tijdschrift voor Philosophie*, June, 1953, pp. 267-286, Gilson says that while Cajetan does not contradict St. Thomas, in his commentary on the *Summa* he studiously ignores the saint's metaphysical revolution (*esse* as act of the form) to devote his real attention to Aristotle's notion of being. "One would have to see it to believe it." In his *In De ente et essentia* Cajetan, according to Gilson, recapitulates St. Thomas' metaphysics but in his elucidations substitutes the Aristotelian doctrine for the Thomistic one without advertising the switch.

<sup>5</sup> ". . . libellos de Eucharistia, de confessione, et de invocatione Divorum, in quibus mihi vehementer placuit et erudita brevitatis, et disputandi sobrietatis . . ." *Liber* xxiv, fol. 950 *Epistolarum Erasmi*. Cajetan, in turn, was strongly influenced by Erasmus in his reconstruction of the N.T. text, but he showed a greater reverence for the Vulgate than did Erasmus. In a much less striking degree, Cajetan also benefited from Lefèvre d'Étaples, the French humanist-exegete.

<sup>6</sup> Cajetan, in fact, hardly wrote anything at all, his *De Ente et Essentia* notably excepted, while a teacher. It was only as Master General and Cardinal, now aware of the Church's real needs, that the torrent of commentaries and *opuscula* really begins. When he was named a Prince of the Church he asserted in his commentary on the 3<sup>d</sup> *Pars*, then in hand, that he must now study ever more zealously the mysteries of Christ and the sacraments of the Church; Q. 7, a. 11.

<sup>7</sup> Hubert Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*. Vol. I, pp. 392-3.

<sup>8</sup> From Cajetan's *Praef. in Pentateuchen* as translated by Father Hugh Pope, O.P., *Blackfriars*, Vol. 26, p. 96, (1945). Father Pope omitted or overlooked the controverted phrase, "though differing from the torrent of the Fathers," which we have added. Cajetan's interpretations on the "Bread of Life Discourse" (*John* VI), the ordination of the first seven deacons (*Acts* VI, 6), the anointing of the sick (*James* V, 14, 15), the materiality of the angels (*Eph.* II, 2)—here he "sacrifices" his own teaching in his commentary on the *Summa*, 1<sup>o</sup> *Pars*. Q. 50,—etc., shows how far he was determined to let "Scripture interpret Scripture." Cfr. Vosté, O.P., "*Cardinalis Caietanus Sacrae Scripturae Interpres*," *Angelicum*, 1934, Vol. XI, pp. 491-504—"Doctrina theologica." Vosté is more instructive on this point than Alberto Colunga, O.P., "*El Cardenal Cayetano y los problemas de introducción bíblica*," *Ciencia Tomista*, 1918, Vol. XVIII, pp. 21-32; 168-175, because Colunga does not discuss in detail Cajetan's N.T. commentaries of which Vosté has given a most complete analysis. It is in the N.T. passages like the ones cited above that we can see in application what

Cajetan meant when he said that "God left Scripture to interpret Scripture, yet always under the interpretation of the Catholic Church." When Cajetan found that he had to surrender the testimony of the eyes to the thundering voice of tradition he did yield, but not always in a graceful manner! When interpreting *Matthew XIX, 9* and *I Cor. VII, 15* he expresses his astonishment, even his stupefaction, that the torrent of the Doctors has not followed the unmistakable meaning of Christ's own words. It should be noted finally that while there may be many implicit citations from the Fathers in Cajetan's commentaries, in the crucial questions they seem often to exercise, at best, the role of restrainers rather than of positive guides.

<sup>9</sup> Cajetan deliberately abandoned the scholastic device of divisions and subdivisions found in the Scriptural commentaries of St. Bonaventure, St. Albert and St. Thomas.

<sup>10</sup> Padre Colunga concentrated on the O.T. commentaries, Vosté on those of the New where most of Cajetan's eyebrow-raising obiter-dicta are to be found.

<sup>11</sup> Catharinus, a professional calumniator, who handed out abuse with a lavish hand, accused his Dominican brother, Cajetan, of committing almost as many errors in his Scriptural commentaries as he had spumed words.

<sup>12</sup> The most glaring shortcoming in Cajetan's commentary is that he remains faithful to the medieval tradition of following St. Jerome's authority in determining the authentic Canon of the Scriptures and other allied questions. Vosté feels Cajetan should have shown a greater readiness to follow the determinations of the Council of Florence on the Scriptural Canon; Colunga maintains that the problem was not adequately settled until Trent. On his own Cajetan confuses authenticity and canonicity for the O.T. books; insists that in the N.T. inspiration is exclusively attached to an Apostolic office or mandate. Though he sometimes wrote his commentaries with too great swiftness, was unmoved by the literary grace, poetry or rhetorical power of either the N. or O.T. and (because of his scholastic background, says Colunga) inferior to Estius and Maldonatus in his critico-historical exegesis, his commentaries remain rich theological and exegetical sources, particularly *Romans, John, Genesis* especially chapters I-III, the Sermon on the Mount, the *Oratio Dominica*. He used the most exacting care to reconstruct the original Biblical texts, above all the Psalms.

<sup>13</sup> Again, Cajetan's homely appearance was hardly enhanced by his crossed eyes and large nose, *fortement busque*. The Painter of "The Triumph of St. Thomas" has made the nose of a neighbor so prominent that it discreetly covers Cajetan's left eye. It is not out of place to mention here as well, that if Cajetan seemed aloof in his ordinary personal contacts, he became transformed whenever he played the role of a teacher. Bartholemew of Spina, a contemporary biographer, speaks of his rare liveliness in teaching. Those who are familiar with his commentary on the *Summa* can testify to his friendliness and solicitude for the student.

<sup>14</sup> His first encyclical letter as Master General was to be a mere nine lines.

<sup>15</sup> The *Oratio Flavii*, ostensibly a funeral oration, though there is reason to believe this is a mere literary device, makes difficult reading with its ostentatious Ciceronianism and shower of interjections like: *me Hercule, per deos immortales* and *Dive Xyste* (St. Cajetan!). Yet, it displays a genuine affection and veneration for his master and provides precious personal details. Interestingly, Flavio boasts that in the sack of Rome (1527) Charles V's mercenaries did not dare to lay a hand on the studious, impeturbable Cajetan, who, says Flavio, retired to the

impregnable citadel of his mind. Cajetan soon ransomed himself and withdrew to Gaeta, now his episcopal see.

<sup>16</sup> Vincent Bandelli of the Congregation of Observance of Lombardy as Master General patronized this favorite son of the Congregation. Carafa, Cardinal-Archbishop of Naples, also treated his compatriot as a promising protégé. When at the death of Clérée in 1507 Carafa made Cajetan Vicar General he was giving the future vocals a very broad hint.

<sup>17</sup> So Mortier in his *Histoire des Maitres Generaux*, Vol. V, p. 206, (1911). It also, of course, gave Leo an opportunity to show the prelates that the Pope would initiate any general changes in Church administration. At this same Council Cajetan opined that to hold that Mary was preserved from Original Sin was probable; that she had been cleansed, tolerable. He asked Leo X to decide. There is no basis in fact for the statement found in both Gilson, *op. cit.*, p. 801, and Copleston, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 340, that Cajetan opposed the demonstrability of the immortality of the human soul at this Council. The text from Mansi, *Amplissima collectio* 32, col. 843, which Gilson cites but does not quote, actually says: "And the reverend Father, the lord Thomas, general of the Order of Preachers, said he did not approve of the second part of the bull commanding philosophers to teach, by public defense, the truth of the faith." The obvious sense of this reference is that given by M. H. Laurent, O.P., "Commentaria in De Anima Aristotelis," *Angelicum*, 1938, pp. xxxvi, xxxvii, that Cajetan opposed a general directive to philosophers to discharge a function proper to theologians. In 1509, in his commentary on the *De Anima*, Cajetan went on record for the last time as convinced of the demonstrability of the human soul's immortality. Not until 1528 did he again broach the question in his commentary on *Romans IX*, 21-23 where he certainly denies that it is patient of demonstration. There is simply no objective evidence at all to tell us what his attitude was in 1513, at the time of the Council.

<sup>18</sup> The Curia, says Fonseca, one of Cajetan's early biographers, found Cajetan "non suavis, non comis, non urbanus, sed insipidus, sed cholericus dictus est, singularis etiam et arrogans." Yet, by 1534 his great achievements for the Church had won the admiration of many of the Cardinals. If he had lived longer he might very well have succeeded Clement VII as Pope.

<sup>19</sup> Cajetan himself had received a special dispensation to be ordained at the end of his twenty-second year.

<sup>20</sup> "On 12 October 1511, Thomas de Vio, the Dominican and future Cardinal Cajetan, completed his work entitled *De comparatione auctoritatis papae et concilii*. In this book the author, not content to refute the conciliar theory, also deals with the arguments with which Decio and the other juridical advisers of the minority cardinals had attempted to justify their action . . . as well as with the background of that theory, that is, Gerson's attribution to the Church and to the Council of the right to control the Pope's government. It was a momentous event when, in the person of Cajetan, a theologian—perhaps the greatest theologian of his time—intervened in the debate and pushed the canonists aside. From that day the question became an integral part of dogmatic theology. The reply of Jacques Almain, a young theologian of Paris, could no longer influence the course of events, nor was Cajetan's answer long delayed." Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*, Vol. I, p. 114. The Paris theological faculty was later to have its revenge, though, when it condemned certain propositions drawn from Cajetan's Scripture commentaries, thereby helping to prejudice the Catholic world against Cajetan the exegete for centuries, and at the same time, though

unwittingly, giving aid and comfort to the Lutheran enemy, delighted to see the former Papal Legate to Germany in such "disrepute."

Flavio's assertion that Cajetan suggested to Julius II the holding of a Council in Rome (Fifth Lateran) to counter the pseudo-Council at Pisa is repeated by Mandonnet (cfr. article on Cajetan in *D.T.C.*) who finds Cajetan's suggestion most apt. But Von Pastor feels it is extremely unlikely that Cajetan was the author of the plan.

<sup>21</sup> A good Cajetan bibliography may be found in Gilson's *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, pp. 800, 801. For the latest treatment of Cajetan's teaching on usury and allied subjects consult the index of Noonan's *The Scholastic Analysis of Usury*, 1957. Philip Hughes in his *The Reformation in England*, Vol. I, p. 169, discusses Cajetan's prescient (1517!) treatment of the problem of whether Henry VIII's marriage to Catherine was valid and licit: 2<sup>a</sup> 2<sup>ae</sup>, Q. 154, a. 9. Seventeen years later it was to be Cajetan who would bring the vacillating Clement VII to do his duty in declaring the marriage valid. It was this same Clement of whom Loaysa, then Dominican Master General, wrote concerning the marriage case: "I have never spoken with anyone whose sayings were so hard to decipher." Interestingly, it was likewise Cajetan who is credited with nerving Leo X to issue the Bull of condemnation against Luther, *Exsurge Domine*. Cajetan's most important tract written against Luther was the *De Divina Institutione Pontificatus*, 1521. It was never answered.