

BALMES Jaime Luciano—philosopher, sociologist, apologist, political writer; b. August 28, 1810 in Vich in Catalonia, d. July 9, 1848.

At sixteen years of age he began studies at the University of Cervera where he thoroughly learned the intellectual heritage of Aquinas, Cajetan, Bellarmine, and Suarez. In 1834 he was ordained a priest and a year later obtained a doctorate in theology. Thereafter he lived in his native Vich, Barcelona, and Madrid.

Balmes major works: *Consideraciones políticas sobre la situación en España* (Ba 1840); *La religion demostrada al alcance los niños* (Ba 1841); *Observaciones sociales, políticas y económicas sobre los bienes del clero* (Vich 1840, Ba 1954²); *El protestantismo comparado con el catecismo en sus relaciones con la civilización europea* (I–V, Ba 1842–1844, 1845²); *Katolicyzm i protestantyzm w stosunku do cywilizacji europejskiej*, I, Lw 1873); *Cartas a un escéptico en materia de religión* (Ba 1846), and works devoted completely to philosophical questions:—*El criterio* (Ba 1845, Ma 1960⁸); *Filosofía fundamental* (I–IV, Ba 1846, 1868⁴) and *Curso de filosofía elemental* (I–IV, Ba 1847). A critical edition of Balmes' works is found in *Obras completas* (I–XXXIII, Ba 1925–1927) and in a critical corrected edition: *Obras completas* (I–VIII, Ma 1948–1950).

In his philosophical thought Balmes thought that a synthesis of Thomism (he regarded himself as a Thomist) and other philosophical currents, especially Leibniz, Descartes, and Reid, was necessary. He started from the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas and initiated the development of research on scholasticism. He wanted to bring Thomism as philosophical and theological doctrine closer to the scientific mentality of the nineteenth century and so to oppose the expanding currents of empiricism, skepticism, sensualism, German pantheistic idealism, and Kant's philosophy. Balmes' thought was extremely eclectic. He held to epistemological realism. In his starting point he accepted as evident Descartes' thesis *cogito ergo sum*, supporting it by an idea from Reid that common sense convinces of our own existence and the existence of the world around us (he postulates common sense here as the necessity of reliance on the "clear and distinct ideas" proposed by Descartes, and on the principle of non-contradiction as the foundation of evidence). Thus the existence of man as subject and the existence of reality external to him is the foundation of evidence and the starting point for showing the indubitable criterium of truth. Balmes here distinguishes between the concept of truth and the concept of certainty. Truth is the expression of the agreement of the ideal order with the thing. Certainty is the mental acceptance of the truth. There are two kinds of certainty: general human certainty (acquired spontaneously and instinctively), and philosophical certainty (the fruit of intellectual reflection. The truth may be ideal or real. Ideal truth concerns the world of facts and real concrete things. Real truth concerns the world of the laws of logic (the principle of non-contradiction here is most important), and possible facts. The knowledge of ideal facts (general ideas) does not lead to a simple affirmation of real facts. Ideal truths (as general and necessary) have their ultimate rational justification in God who is the cause of their existence. Balmes expresses his belief that the objectivity of cognition goes beyond the domain of philosophy and belongs more to the domain of common sense. Therefore he postulated the need to reconcile philosophical certainty with general human certainty. On this basis he formulated the theory of "three fundamental truths" understood as infallible criteria of certainty. They are: the affirmation of the fact of existence, the principle of non-contradiction (the basis of evidence), and the fundamental "intellectual instinct" as the "mechanism" that guarantees objective cognition.

Balmes' greatest merit is that he called attention to epistemological problems. His attention was directed in large measure to an attack on idealism (the apologetic profile of Balmes' thought), especially Kant, and also the idealist implications of Descartes' system. Balmes treated all the types of cognition accessible to man as representations. He divided these representations into representations of identity (the representation of the thing in itself), of causality (the effects that are the image of the cause), and ideative representations (the cognitive act itself in relation to the object).

The program of philosophical work that Balmes outlined contributed to a revival of Christian philosophical thought in Spain (where an institute dedicated to his memory, the Balmesiana, publishes the periodicals "Analecta sacra Tarraconensia" and "Bibliografía hispánica de ciencias histórico-eclesiásticas"), Italy, Germany, and France.

In his views in sociology, historiosophy, and political theory, Balmes stated the need for a Christian link between Protestantism and Catholicism. He saw and emphasized the very powerful influence of the Catholic Church on the continual development and shape of western civilization. He firmly supported the democratic model of the state, but thought that a highest political authority should be preserved. He condemned the unjust distribution of material goods and the lack of respect for the proper autonomy of the human person.

M. Prados y Lopez, *Balmes, el buen amigo de la verdad*, Ma 1951; E. V. Feliú, *Sistematización del pensamiento de Balmes*, Ma 1952; H. Auhofer, *Die Soziologie des Jakob Balmes*, Mn 1953; I. Casanovas, *Apologética de Balmes*, Ba 1953; L. Riba, *Balmes*, Vich 1955; F. Gonzalez Cordero, *El instinto intelectual fuente de conocimiento. Doctrina de Balmes sobre el instinto ciego, su critica y valoración en el orden ético*, Ma 1956; A. Munoz Alonso, *Principios y fundamento de la filosofía de Balmes*, Ma 1961; T. Tusquest, *Jaime Balmes, son système philosophique*, P 1962; F. Sainz de Robbes, *Jaime Balmes*, Ma 1964; T. Alesanco, *El instinto intelectual en la epistemología de Jaime B*, Sal 1965; J. Riezu, *El pensamiento sociológico de Jaime Balmes*, Estudios filosóficos 15 (1966), 529–540; G. Fraile, T. Urdanos, *Historia de la filosofía*, Ma 1972, 96–99; Krapiec Dz [works] VIII 9–15.

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