

Blackfriars

THE NEW AND ETERNAL COVENANT. By Dom Anscar Vonier, O.S.B., Abbot of Buckfast. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne, Ltd. ; 6/-.)

Let us begin to consider our Catholic Faith anew, let us stand back and regard it as a whole ; no, let us step forward into its full light, and see the big things as important ones, the lesser in their proper places, the whole in proportion. Too long have necessary tactics forced us to see minor points as over-important, causing the great mysteries of our Faith to be somewhat dwarfed ; ' through the struggles with heresy Catholic doctrine loses something of its harmonious proportions, as we have to insist on one truth almost to the exclusion of others in our defensive work. At the same time one task ought not to be above our capacity—that of enumerating the permanent, the unalterable, the everlasting elements of Catholicism, and the glories of our inheritance ; glories which no human wickedness, no instability of human mind, no historic happenings could ever dim.'

To this ideal Catholicism Abbot Vonier applies the word ' classical ' in the sense it is used in all æsthetical literature. ' It means a clear apprehension, and that not only by a few but by the many, of the essential things as essential, however high and lofty they may be.' The classical things of Christianity are to be found in the Eternal Covenant. ' God has entered through the Blood of Christ into a new and eternal Covenant with man, a new and everlasting Testament.'

' The Trinity is not the Covenant, but the end of the Covenant.' Only those divine realities constitute the new Covenant which begins in the Person of Christ. The Incarnation, Christ the Son of God, Christ our Brother, His Priesthood, His Sacrifice on the Cross, His Resurrection, the Coming of the Holy Ghost, the institution of the Sacraments, the founding of the Church.

Man's share in the Covenant is ' an entering in ' ; his expression of it in worship, is ' Liturgy ; his participation in it, fed by the Sacraments ; his faith in it, founded on the divine promises. These are but a few of the glorious things set forth in this magnificent book. Quotations could be multiplied without number, and even then give only a small idea of its great qualities. Such a feat is impossible in a short review, the only remedy is to read the book.

The only criticism one could possibly offer is of occasional vagueness, and perhaps even that is praise since it might be better called spaciousness. It is in the truest sense—the

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author's sense—'classical,' it breathes with the same spirit as the writings of the Fathers, full of Scriptural phraseology and quotation.

F.M.

THE FRANCISCANS. By Fr. James, O.S.F.C. (Sheed & Ward; 2/6.)

This is the fourth volume to be published of *The Many Mansions* series on the religious orders. Fittingly has the work been entrusted to an eminent Franciscan, Fr. James O'Mahoney, O.S.F.C., the author of *The Desire of God in the Philosophy of St. Thomas*. In such hands the exposition of the spirit and ideals of the Order is wisely carried out. Notably does Fr. James stress the intimate link which has ever bound the Order to the Church. The Church cradled the Order in its infancy, and in no niggardly fashion has that early interest been, during seven centuries, repaid. Not quite so wholeheartedly as Fr. Devas, O.F.M., in his kindred volume, *The Franciscan Order*—surely the Ishmael to Fr. James' Isaac—but still clearly enough, does Fr. James endorse the view that reforms among the Franciscans were largely efforts at balance between the active and contemplative apostolate to which the Order is devoted. In the matter of the Franciscans and science, Fr. James, as we might expect, is particularly good. 'One of the highest forms of charity,' he writes, 'is that intellectual charity which divines, and essays to satisfy, the needs of the mind.' The book is somewhat marred by a few bad misprints, unusual in Sheed and Ward publications.

O.F.M.

THE HISTORY OF THE CREEDS. By F. J. Badcock, D.D. (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Pp. xiv., 249; 12/6.)

Dr. Badcock has succeeded in writing on the Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian Creeds with such untrammelled frankness that he may endanger his welcome from the scholars.

He takes no time in coming to a frontal attack on 'the great names,' which we were expected to look upon as authority some years ago. The first words of his book are as follow: 'Thanks be to the vast erudition of Harnack and Kattenbusch a false literary pedigree has been invented for the Old Roman Creed These German scholars have been followed by Dr. Burn and Bishop Gibson Unless we are overborne by the