

highly autocratic actions.' Only from such realistic vigorous writers as Fr Brodrick can we expect living and human pictures of the saints, showing that holiness is the quality of a real man, not a hard and uniform state into which a man has to fix himself. Fr Brodrick, as we should expect, accomplishes his task as official biographer of St Francis in a vivid and virile manner that makes his history such entertaining reading. Fr O'Connor, in a book a tenth of the size of Fr Brodrick's, celebrates the fourth centenary of Xavier's death by sketching his life with special reference to his power of getting prayers answered, in particular during the novena from March 4th to 12th. But it is the saint as a man of action, whose action deepened and did not distract his love, whose spirit breathes through his hastily written letters; it is this man who has a style of holiness most appropriate for today.

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF ABBOT VONIER. (2 vols.; Burns Oates; 25s. each.)

It has been a happy decision to bring out a new edition of Abbot Vonier's works, by reprinting ten of the more important in three volumes. Only a slight abridgement of the original text and a few verbal corrections and clarifications have been made. Here are the first two handsome volumes of the publication which will stand as a suitable literary monument to Abbot Vonier, who, perhaps best remembered as the builder of the great Abbey of Buckfast, was indeed also a great priest, preacher, writer, and spiritual guide. The present Abbot of Buckfast, Dom Bruno Fehrenbacher, has thought well to offer as an introduction a brief and pleasing sketch of his life.

Volume I, *The Incarnation and Redemption*, contains four books entitled The Christian Mind, The Personality of Christ, The Victory of Christ, The Divine Motherhood. In these most attractive pages great originality is shown in the mode of presentation. The prevailing spirits of triumph and enthusiasm cannot fail to win the reader's confidence and attention, whilst the truths of faith are so tellingly expounded, and skilfully unfolded in their marvellous beauty.

Volume II: *The Church and The Sacraments*, is composed of three books, The Spirits and the Bride, The People of God, A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist. As the Editor has well said, these 'writings are concerned with the prolongation of that work of Christ in the Church—first as manifesting to the world, through the power of the Holy Spirit, His glorious victory, then as embracing in splendid spiritual solidarity the elect people of God; finally as possessing those divinely instituted means of sanctification through configuration with Christ—the Sacraments, of which the Holy Eucharist is the centre and perfection.' In this presentation it is brought home that the Church is a society proof against any dissolving agency, which 'manifests such marks of excellence that its

divine character becomes evident'. (p.3.) This rests on the 'principle of faith that it is through the Holy Ghost that the Church is vivified and unified'. (p. 7.)

Book Three has already made its contribution to the theological exposition of the doctrine of the Eucharist, especially in the sacramental view of the Sacrifice of the Mass, according to the idiom and thought of St Thomas. The doctrine follows on easily and naturally from the splendid chapters of the first volume, where the Holy Eucharist is represented as the memorial of Christ's death but also as a monument of his victory over Satan, over Sin, and over death.

AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.

NOTICES

THESES AND PAPERS

THE LONDON AQUINAS SOCIETY'S two latest papers are of great importance to the study of mystical theology. In No. 19 Dr A. H. Armstrong discusses *The Greek Philosophical Background of the Psychology of St Thomas* and claims that St Thomas 'has transplanted the Aristotelian doctrine of the unity of body and mind into a Platonic context' guided thereto by the revealed doctrine of the fall and the resurrection of the body. Dr Armstrong in this inspiringly provocative essay shows many other Platonic elements in St Thomas's thought. Fr Gerald Vann, O.P., in Paper No. 20, follows this discussion with a conspectus of *The Wisdom of Boethius*, the first great Christian thinker who set out to show the fundamental accord of Plato and Aristotle. 'We might well have recourse to Boethius to renew our wonder and love and understanding of the earth and its fullness and the beauty that comes forth from man's hand.' (Both 1s. 6d. each; Blackfriars.)

SACRA DOCTRINA, the subject-matter of St Thomas's first question in the *Summa* and indeed that of the whole work, has always been difficult to interpret; and Fr Gerald F. van Ackeren, S.J., selects it for a thorough-going investigation (Rome; Officium Libri Catholici; n.p.). Père Y. Congar, O.P., contributes an introduction in which he points to the special value in this thesis. The phrase 'Sacred Doctrine' has a meaning that works, so to speak, in two directions: It is the action of teaching or educating in revealed truth, and it is also the content of the teaching. As the author claims, the proper understanding of this question alone gives the true meaning of 'Catholic education' which ought to be the English equivalent to the Latin phrase. The thesis is written in English and is specially to be recommended to educationists.

DE PULCHRITUDINE. Fr Jordan Aumann, O.P., calls his Latin treatise