

REVIEWS

ST DOMINIC AND HIS WORK. By Pierre Mandonnet, O.P. Translated by Sister M. Benedicta Larkin, O.P. (B. Herder, London; 37s. 6d.)

St Dominic and his work may be regarded as a subject of merely historical interest, for it is sometimes said of the older religious orders that they have ceased to do the work for which they were originally founded. Though it is true that the Dominican Order was called into being by the Holy See through St Dominic to combat heresy that threatened the Church in the thirteenth century, the aim of the Order has remained unchanged because it is essentially apostolic and Christian. The genius of St Dominic was that he placed his Order, as it were, midway between the older monastic orders that have contemplation and personal sanctification as their aim, and the later active orders that followed the Dominican lead in working for the salvation of souls.

St Dominic saw the salvation of souls as the end of his prayer, of his study and his teaching. To the old monastic observances of choral office and the common life he added intense study, because there is no dichotomy between truth in the study book and contemplated Truth. A Dominican does not contemplate and study in order to preach and save souls, but because he has acquired a deep personal knowledge of God through his prayer and study, he is filled with zeal for the apostolate. The closer a man is to Christ the more apostolic he becomes—his zeal for souls is measured in proportion to his sanctity; his preaching and teaching are the natural overflow of his contemplation.

The Dominicans were founded in the thirteenth century to combat a heresy that maintained a belief in a double principle in the origin of things. In the twentieth century there is also a twofold principle to be faced—rank materialism on the one hand, and on the other an uglier and more subtle evil—intellectual pride. Due perhaps to greater educational facilities, a feverish anxiety to be cultured and intellectual results in superficiality and shallowness. The mark of true intellectuality is a deeply rooted and fundamental humility, precisely because it is then that man sees and recognises his position in relation to God and his fellow-creatures; while true refinement is unselfconscious consideration for one's neighbour.

The 'Dominican' ideal of intellectuality and the practice of the evangelical counsels has a universal value for all men, though admittedly in varying degrees according to their various states of life. For this reason a book on St Dominic and his work could have universal value in as much as it reminds not only Dominicans but all Catholics of their vocation and gives a fresh impetus to their apostolic zeal. This is achieved, in a measure, in the opening chapters of this book in which a concise and interesting

account of this historical setting and organisation of the Order is given—though, taken as a whole, the book may only have value for the student of history and the lover of Dominicans. For a work of its kind it is perhaps too long (it is a posthumous work compiled from papers of Père Mandonnet) and will serve best as a reference book.

This English edition reads smoothly on the whole, though occasional passages are a little clumsy—inevitable, perhaps, in a work of this kind—and some phrases become rather florid when translated into English. The title is, I think, a little inept, especially in this translation, as very little of the actual character of St Dominic seems to come through the narrative and the single chapter devoted to this subject is disappointing.

DOMINIC BALDWIN, O.P.

THE TRINITY AND THE UNICITY OF THE INTELLECT. By St Thomas Aquinas.

Translated by Sr Rose Emmanuella Brennan, S.H.N. (Herder; 22s. 6d.)

COMPENDIUM OF THEOLOGY. By St Thomas Aquinas. Translated by Cyril Vollert, S.J., S.T.D. (Herder; 30s.)

Messrs Herder have sent these two American translations of St Thomas for review. It is perhaps as well to point out that they are works of philosophy and theology, scientific in method and often necessarily technical in vocabulary, not, therefore, spiritual reading for the everyday catholic. The first volume contains translations of two of St Thomas's shorter works, his Commentary on the sixth century *De Trinitate* of Boethius, and his *De Unitate Intellectus* written against contemporary opponents in the interpretation of Aristotle's psychology. The second volume is a translation of a longer but unfinished work of St Thomas known as the *Compendium Theologiae* not a summary of the *Summa Theologica*, but an attempt to present 'teaching on the Christian Religion' in a short but comprehensive treatise under the three main headings of Faith, Hope and Charity. In fact, as the translator points out, 'His untimely death prevented him from realising his plan: he got no farther than the tenth chapter of Part Two . . .'. Even so, he had already covered much of the ground of the First and Third Parts of the *Summa Theologica*. Under the heading of Faith he treats of the One God, the Trinity of Persons, Creation, Creatures and Sin, then of the Incarnation of the Son of God and his work as Redeemer. The second part of the work under the heading of Hope ends without completing the tenth chapter. These few chapters begin a treatise on Prayer, based on an exposition of the 'Our Father', which however did not get as far as the third petition.

Certainly these are amongst the most important of his shorter works for an understanding of St Thomas's thought and, on a number of points, a valuable supplement to his treatment in the *Summa Theologica*. It is, too, particularly fortunate that translations of them should be published