

Book Reviews

THOMAS AQUINAS: HIS PERSONALITY AND THOUGHT. By Dr. Martin Grabmann. Authorised translation. By Virgil Michel, O.S.B., Ph.D.; 8vo; 191 and lx pp. (Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd.; 10/6 net.)

While it is generally admitted that Dr. Grabmann is a master in the history of mediæval thought, it is, above all, certain that he will write with the authority of intimate acquaintance and sympathetic intelligence on the personality and thought of St. Thomas Aquinas. In introducing this present work, therefore, in its well-fitting English cloak, we need not recommend it even to those who are not familiar with the original; it is good wine. It is perhaps inevitable, however, that we should be led at once to compare it with a similar publication by M. Gilson, *Le Thomisme* (wrongly called in the otherwise admirable English translation, *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*). Let us say at once that neither work replaces the other; each has its particular value. But whereas M. Gilson has been especially concerned to give a summary of the Thomist synthesis in itself, Dr. Grabmann's objective is something wider. In *Part One* of his volume we find a vivid portrait of the Angelic Doctor, a portrait gradually built up from a myriad details which flash like the facets of a precious stone turned slowly under the light. St. Thomas stands out as much a unity in his personality as in his thought. He appears as a master of the highest authority, not merely because of his great sanctity, his clarity of intellect, his fearless adherence to all the truths of reason as well as of faith, his power of independent speculation founded on a comprehensive study of his predecessors, Christian and otherwise, nor yet because of his broad-mindedness (which does not mean in him, as nowadays, doctrinal haziness). It is, still more, because all these qualities were directed with an intense unity of purpose to the attainment of the One Subsisting Truth, God. So vivid a picture has Dr. Grabmann made for us that his work has all the freshness and merit of originality in the breaking of by no means virgin soil.

In *Part Two*, dealing more directly with the Thomist Synthesis, the author has set down with much understanding the salient features of Thomism. Here he clearly strikes out in a direction different from that taken by M. Gilson. Whereas the latter is intent precisely upon setting forth a clear statement of the doctrine, Dr. Grabmann is more concerned to prepare the mind for a true approach to the doctrine. This is, in fact, the whole purpose of the book, we venture to suggest.

Blackfriars

The author has purposed to set St. Thomas and his doctrine in their proper historical setting. He has succeeded in a striking fashion, to this extent, indeed, that his book is not so much a useful guide as almost a necessity to those who desire sincerely to assimilate the thought of the great Doctor who is surely, if slowly, regaining his sovereignty over the philosophical and theological thought of our times.

H.J.C.

VIVRE LA TRINITE ET JESUS, OU LA THEOLOGIE VECUE. Le Père A. Philippe, C.S.S.R. Imprimerie-Librairie Saint-Alphonse, Esschen (Belgique).

It is with the fundamental principles of theology, of divine truth and, therefore, of our divine life, that Père Philippe deals. The Blessed Trinity, Jesus Christ crucified, are the great themes of the book. In Jesus Christ we grow in grace, and in union with the Trinity (would not *Vivre Jésus et la Trinité* be a better title?). The most sublime doctrines of theology are set down in clear, simple language, and with an accuracy not often to be met with in religious writings intended for general use; though here and there the text might be changed to advantage—for example, when speaking of the universal character of Christ's sufferings (pp. 109 *et seq.*), of His words 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me' (p. 112), of what sacrifice is (p. 110; Supplement, p. 2). Christ could not suffer the principal pain of hell, the pain of loss (*cf.* p. 111). But these shortcomings are slight in comparison with the sterling qualities of the book—the soundness of its principles, its trend of thought, the standpoint from which everything is viewed. Life lived in union with Jesus, imitating His virtues, guided by His Spirit acting through 'the gifts'—such is the doctrine preached. Prayer, Mass, Holy Communion, our Blessed Lady, Confession—all are treated of in a most helpful way. There is an admirable chapter on trusting in God. 'Walk before me, and be perfect,' said God to Abraham; 'live with God, Who dwells within you,' is the same golden counsel given in these pages. No life, however busy, need be without this divine companionship. Charity is friendship with God, and the chiefest mark of friendship is to live together as much as possible. Père Philippe shows how this 'living together' should be achieved.

This book is being translated into English by the Benedictine Nuns of St. Mary's Abbey, East Bergholt, Suffolk.

A.M.B.