

## *Blackfriars*

**THE DOMINICAN MISSAL.** In Latin and English. (London: Sheed & Ward, 1932; pp. xlvii, 1624. Black cloth, red edges, 12/6. Morocette, gold edges, 15/-.)

Years of patient work by Fr. Bruno Walkley, O.P., have gone to the making of this translation of the Missal according to the Dominican Rite, which gives the entire Latin and English text in parallel columns throughout. It will be a precious book for the thousands of English-speaking Catholics all over the world—not only in England, Scotland, Ireland, but also in North America, the West Indies, South Africa, China, Japan, Australia—who are accustomed to assist at a Dominican Mass, and for thousands of Dominican brothers, students, nuns, sisters, tertiaries. Even a priest accustomed to the Latin Missal will feel a freshness in the liturgy by looking through these pages—not to delay over the whimsy of 'Low Sunday, Station at St. Pancras.' The commercial success of this translation will provide the opportunity of supplying an omission, an acknowledgement to Fr. John O'Connor for his strong and graceful translations of the sequences in the metre of the originals. The Crypt House Press of Gloucester have done a difficult job well.

N.W.T.G.

**ST. GERMAINE OF THE WOLF COUNTRY.** By Henri Ghéon. Translated by F. J. Sheed, and illustrated by Marigold Hunt. (London: Sheed & Ward; 2/6.)

We cannot help feeling that M. Ghéon meant this delightful tale of the little shepherd-girl with the cruel stepmother to be something more than a mere 'nursery-tale.' We are sure that he meant it for children of all ages. But for better or worse, under the hands of the translator, it remains a book for the nursery only. A charming story certainly, but in the nursery it will remain. The woodcuts, too, are hardly worthy of the most important room in the house, and do not do justice to the little Saint.

P.A.H.

**LES FONDEMENTS SPIRITUELS DE LA VIE.** Par Vladimir Soloviev. Traduction du russe par le R. P. Georges Tzebricow avec la collaboration de l'Abbé A. Martin. Lettre Préface de Mgr. M. d'Herbigny, Evêque d'Ilion. (Bruxelles. Ed. de la Cité Chrétienne, 1932; 20 frs.)

*The Spiritual Foundations of Life*, written by Soloviev when he was only twenty-nine, is one of his most important works. It contains the outline of a philosophy and doctrine which were

subsequently developed, and sometimes partially modified, in Soloviev's later writings. In the introduction the author outlines the natural life of man after his fall. Sin and death are the two enemies of what is best in him, they enslave him and deny him the truth and immortality which he aspires to. Man's life becomes perverted, he lives in revolt against God, in discord with his neighbours and in subservience to nature. Yet it is open to him to start a new life of union with God through prayer and free submission to His will, of peace with his fellow men through charity, and of subjection of his animal nature through fasting and abstinence. But this is not sufficient: man is a social being, and the whole world is in a desperate state of discord and strife. Therefore man's salvation lies in the unity and concord of the world: The Incarnation and the Church which is its continuation are the realisation of this unity. Finally Soloviev considers the State—a human institution which has to be brought into harmony with the divine element of the Church in order to assist her to sanctify and transform the natural and temporal life of society and individuals.

The first part, dealing with personal religious life, seems to be the best. The writer has many profound thoughts on prayer. His commentary on Our Lord's prayer is that of a philosopher and of a mystic. 'Give us this day our daily bread' is for Soloviev, as it was for St. John Chrysostom, primarily a profession of abstinence: the admission of the strictly necessary to the exclusion of the superfluous, a denial of the material life as an end in itself. It is an acknowledgement of our submission to Divine Providence which gives us the necessary conditions for enabling us to fulfil God's will on earth. The chapter dealing with love and charity, sacrifice and almsgiving is no less profound, and sound theological doctrine is illustrated by examples from contemporary life. Both the *bourgeois* liberals and the socialists reject the Christian principle of charity, the first in the name of *work*, the second in the name of *justice*, and yet neither can guarantee that either work or justice will be respected should their ideals ever be realised. Charity, according to the great Russian thinker, is a duty of the rich, and it seems unthinkable for him that in some Christian countries the law forbids the asking of alms, thus making the 'needle's eye' through which the rich are to enter the Kingdom of God still narrower. The question of fasting and abstinence is treated in a wider sense as not only a bodily, but intellectual and spiritual fast.

It is when Soloviev deals with the Church, with Christianity and Creation that he becomes more profound, and . . . .

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imagine less clear. It is to be regretted that he had not made a special study of Thomist philosophy, which would have given him the precise terms for which he was searching. This would have saved him from speaking of a 'world soul,' of evil as a positive reality, or even of the Church as a metaphysical unity, the universal Body of Christ. But even with these few expressions which a Thomist might question, the second part of *The Spiritual Foundations* presents a deep synthesis of human thought. The last chapter of the book deals with the theocratic State, the human society sanctified by the Church which for many years was the cherished idea of Soloviev. Towards the end of his life he seems to have lost faith in the possibility of such a State on earth, and it is not the Christian City, but the Kingdom of the Anti-Christ which commands the obedience of the majority of men in Soloviev's last work, 'The Three Conversations.'

The epilogue gives a simple but effective precept as a rule for the private or social life of men. It is an examination of conscience *before* undertaking any serious decision, and consists in the evoking in our soul of the moral image of Christ with the question: 'Would He act thus?' or otherwise: 'Would He approve of this action? Would He bless me to do it?' These were no empty words for Soloviev, he was the first to live up to his principles. And he survives in the memory of men not only as a profound thinker, a brilliant writer, lecturer and poet, but as a great Christian who led the life of a saint and an ascetic, and whose charity was legendary. '*Soloviev anima candida pia ac vere sancta est*' wrote of him his friend Bishop Strossmayer.

The French translation is excellent, and we can only express the hope that we be soon given an equally good rendering of the book in English.

G.B.

THE KING'S BOOK; or, A Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man, 1543. With an Introduction by T. A. Lacey. Preface by Viscount Halifax. Edition reprinted by photographic process from Bishop Charles Lloyd's edition of *Formularies of Faith put forth by Authority during the reign of Henry VIII*, Oxford, 1825. (London: S.P.C.K., 1932; pp. xx, 165; 6/-.)

Whether this re-issue was an urgent need may be questioned, but the late Canon Lacey's Introduction is interesting. Probably he is right in assuming that Henry VIII had more than