

THE BLESSED TRINITY: History—Theology—Spirituality. By Rev. Valentin-M. Breton, O.F.M., translated by Rev. B. V. Miller, D.D. (Catholic Library of Religious Knowledge; Sands; 3/6.)

It should be obvious that the faithful cannot know too much about their faith. If they know very little, it is not through lack of interest, unless their ignorance is abysmal. The grace of God that is in them does not make them children of God and God-like without giving them a desire to know and understand more about their Father. Very few Catholics are so ignorant as to think their heaven will be the legendary happy land of gold and precious stones. What it will be none of us know fully; but we have all grasped that it will be in some sense a vision of God. Further we all realize that our union with God begins in some way even in this life. This is why by a sort of instinct Catholics must be always ready to sit with Mary at the feet of Jesus and learn about God.

It is occasionally a matter of complaint that this almost natural desire of the child of God is so little fostered and encouraged by his teachers. The faithful hear many exhortations to a good life, but not enough doctrine. It is probably the experience in most towns that good instructions on Catholic dogma are well attended, often by the most unlikely people, not excluding non-Catholics. This may account for the readiness of the faithful to enter into the spirit of the liturgy, once its meaning is brought home to them. And for the same reason, it may not be mere chance that so many people have at one time or another asked me for the names of good books on Catholic theology.

This is why Dr. Miller's translation of Père Breton's excellent book on *The Blessed Trinity* appears so opportunely. The writer is very confident of the Catholicism of his readers and is not afraid to give them a great deal of solid Catholic theology, though always in a manner well understandable of the educated laity. Not only does he treat of his subject theologically but he also tries to stimulate his readers' devotion to the Trinity by showing how marked this devotion has been in the lives and writings of the doctors, saints and common faithful at all times in the Church's history. He shows how it has influenced art and literature, and the exceptional place it has always had in the liturgy. Since the object of the book is to make the faithful know and love the central object of their whole lives deeper and better, we wish it all the success it deserves.

But it is not only for non-theologians that the work will be valuable. Students of theology may have all they absolutely require in the Scriptures, the authoritative decisions of the

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Church and St. Thomas. But who will not gain much from a simple, concise and pleasing explanation in the vernacular of the great scholastic arguments of the Doctor of the Schools? The scholar, even if he gains no new light, may yet learn much from a very able effort to teach even the smallest children of God to understand as much as may be of their ineffable Father.

The arrangement is very clear, and each chapter is headed by a summary of its contents. With regard to the theology, the writer usually follows St. Thomas, but frequently gives as an alternative the explanations of other theologians, especially of the Franciscan school. Sometimes this added illustration or alternative may be very helpful, but there are other occasions when it seems to me that the writer would have been clearer if he had not tried to unite the explanations of the two schools (e.g., p. 134). This however does not detract from the general value of the work. Especially commendable—and in this we Thomists might often learn from the Franciscans—is the deep reverence and devotion which inspires the writer's treatment of his subject throughout the work. From the apologetic point of view, readers will welcome the very lucid summary of the Scripture arguments for the Dogma.

The cheapness of the work perhaps excuses the number of printer's errors (e.g., p. 62, "preparatory feast" for "preparatory fast"; and the very strange Greek and Latin words which appear on pp. 145 and 170!). The translation is good, but I think Dr. Miller has occasionally regretted that English cannot express our theology so happily as French.

H. F. DAVIS.

CATECHETICS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. By R. G. Bandas, Ph.D., S.T.D. et M. (Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee; British Agent, E. J. Coldwell; 6/6.)

"Never did man speak like this man": the Personality of Christ is the golden background for the teaching office of the Church even to its minutest workings, the golden background above whose value and diffusive power for good no human thing can rise, on which all dogma rests, from which it overflows, communicating life through the minds and wills of men, and to which it returns, taking mankind with it to the Source—the Father.

Such is the inspiration of the Christian catechist—the word has no provincial but a cosmic connotation—and to it he turns through prayer and suffering, for the word which he must teach, the word containing and communicating life.

But the Christ of his inspiration is not the Christ of the featureless ikon. It is rather the reality of the crucifix—the living Personality of the Gospels, the Son of Man, our Brother, in