

## Book Notes

With the 60-volume Blackfriars Edition of St Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* now virtually completed, surely Sheed & Ward have picked the best moment to re-issue Walter Farrell's *Companion to the Summa* (£20; £5 per vol.), freshly introduced by the new English translation's general editor, Thomas Gilby. First out in 1941-2, this is one of the most dazzling examples of 'Chicago Thomism'. It is, in Farrell's own words, 'the *Summa* reduced to popular language' (with metaphysical problems exemplified by the holes in doughnuts and so on), and wonderfully readable, but not for a minute can we forget that for Farrell (and most of his school) 'the humanity and perennial modernity of the *Summa* are the skeleton whose flesh and blood is the culture of all the ages' (vol. 1, p. 7). Many of us today prefer to say it is recognition of the 'otherness' of St Thomas—discerning him as a man of his age—which is the key to detecting the breadth of his vision and its relevance for us. The *Companion* has an apologetic tone alien to the *Summa* itself, but it is set firmly in the Dominican tradition and should inspire more people to invest in those 60 surprisingly cheap volumes.

Widely cited since its appearance in French in 1963, Etienne Trocmé's *The Formation of the Gospel according to Mark* (SPCK, £8.50) deserves a warm welcome, although Trocmé's theory that the original gospel stopped at the end of the synoptic apocalypse (i.e. ch. 13) has won hardly any converts. Norman Perrin's good survey of the most momentous modern theological battle, *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus* is available again in limp cloth (SCM, £2.25). So is Rudolf Schnackenburg's *The Moral Teaching of the New Testament* (Burns & Oates, £3.75), and let's congratulate Mowbrays on rescuing for us J. L. Houlden's *Ethics and the New Testament* (£1.75), a corrective to Schnackenburg praised in *New Blackfriars*, July 1974.

James Clarke have reissued the 1937 Attwater translation of *God, Man and the Church*, the classic written by the Russian theologian Vladimir Solovyev in 1885 stressing that 'personal religion' can only be satisfied in 'social religion' (£3); also *Mystics of the Church* (£3), written in 1925 by this century's most remarkable Anglican author on mysticism, Evelyn Underhill. Now, according to Christopher Armstrong's new biography, *Evelyn Underhill* (Mow-

brays, £6), this book had its faults but, even so, it would not have received from her spiritual master von Hugel 'the reception meted out to it by an unsigned review in *Blackfriars* for November that year, in which 'Catholics' were warned of its dire heterodoxy with a mixture of quarter-truths and unsupported innuendos. It was a review which was intended to hurt and did. Evelyn described it as "pure spite"'. Bosh. Considering how militant Catholicism was in those days, the review we printed 50 years ago was quite generous: the book was recommended, though with reservations. The reviewer saw bigger bogies than were there, but the things he pin-pointed (use of psychological categories; seeing the object of contemplation as the making of better shepherds of souls—a big bone of contention among Dominicans of that time—and stress on 'experience') are perennial problems which beset all who reflect on mystics and mysticism.

More Thomas Merton is back—*The Silent Life* (Sheldon, £4; £1.95) and *Thoughts in Solitude* (Burns & Oates, £1.50), both of the mid-50s. (Beware, aspirants: quite a lot of what is said about modern monasteries in *The Silent Life* is just not true any more.) More G. K. Chesterton is back too—his *Charles Dickens* of 1906 (Burns & Oates, £2.75). And another sign of the G.K. revival is the new twice-yearly journal of the G. K. Chesterton Society, *The Chesterton Review* (\$4 or £1 p.a.; St Thomas More College, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada). Vol. 1, No. 2 has an article by Jay P. Corrin, 'The Formation of the Distributist Circle'. We regret, of course, that so many of the most gifted English Catholics of the inter-war years—including many of the best contributors to *Blackfriars*—should have spent so much energy on rushing down a blind alley. But what a splendid alley they made it!

Faber's new Ezra Pound anthology, *Selected Poems 1908-1959* (£3.50; £1.30) is an improvement, containing now 'Homage to Sextus Propertius' and a generous selection from the Cantos. But if you want a culture shock read one after another Ernesto Cardenal's *Marilyn Monroe and other poems* (Search Press, £2.50) and the young English writers in *Poetry Introduction 3* (Faber, 95p) . . . starting, say, with Paul Groves' 'Sexecutive'.

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