

BLACKFRIARS

(With which is incorporated *The Catholic Review*)

Literary Communications should be addressed to THE EDITOR, BLACKFRIARS, OXFORD. Telephone 3607. The Editor cannot be responsible for the loss of MSS. submitted. No MSS. will be returned unless accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope.

Single copies of BLACKFRIARS may be obtained through any bookseller, price One Shilling, in America Twenty-five Cents. *Yearly subscription*, Twelve Shillings, in America Three Dollars, may be sent to The Rolls House Publishing Co., Ltd., Rolls House, 2 Breams Buildings, London, E.C.4.

Communications in regard to *Advertisements* should be addressed to The Rolls House Publishing Co., Ltd., 2 Breams Buildings, London, E.C.4. Telephone Holborn 5708, 5709, 0603. Telegrams 'Publmedi, London.'

Vol. XVI, No. 185

August 1935

EDITORIAL

SAINT DOMINIC, previsioned by his mother as a dog bearing in its mouth a flaming torch wherewith the world was set afire, has not that universal and often sentimental popularity with which some of the Saints of God are favoured (or abused). This may well be because the prophetic vision of Blessed Jane of Aza was so gloriously fulfilled in the apostolate of her son, the champion of Truth. A coursing hound and a blazing torch—the one will not be restrained by fear or by fence, the other not only illuminates but may destroy. That torch of Truth was carried indeed in the mouth of Dominic, the Friar Preacher, throughout the length and breadth of Europe, and while it brought light to those who sit in darkness it brought also destruction to the powers of evil and to the weaknesses of compromise. *Veritas odium parit*. The Truth of God, the Incarnate Word Himself, was set for the fall and for the resurrection of many, was a sign that should be contradicted, a stumbling block even to the chosen people. Small wonder if Dominic, with his single-minded zeal for the spread of Divine Truth, should suffer a like fate. Naked truth is often unattractive to the many; they would rather clothe it, and so, if possible, stifle it. It is

so often disturbing and distasteful—just as the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount are disturbing and distasteful, even to the children of the household. And he who blazons them abroad will be as likely to engender hatred as to engender love; at best both truth and its champions will leave many seemingly worthy folk unmoved. They would rather misinterpret the joyous simplicity and warmth of a St. Francis or a Ste. Thérèse, disregarding their asceticism and their heroic virtue, to misuse them as a protection against such uncomfortable attentions as those of a dog with a blazing torch in its mouth.

St. Dominic is mostly remembered by the “many-headed” (when he is remembered at all) as the cruel and relentless arch-inquisitor, enemy of that “liberty of thought” which men of to-day seek so avidly and misunderstand so pathetically. How false is this conception can be realized fully by those alone who not only know the sweet gentleness of Dominic’s soul, but appreciate also, as he did, with St. Paul the fact that freedom is to be found only in truth, the truth of God. If he seemed hard in his refusal to compromise (even Paul withstood Cephas to the face) it was in the best interests of all mankind; if he was relentless in his attack on heresy, it was because he knew it to be the direst enemy of man’s freedom and happiness—and he loved all men with a great love. In his day, as in ours, false standards of value were becoming spread abroad by soul-destroying error. But in our day, far more than in his, the fabric of society is become almost wholly sham. It is required only that things should look well, and be cheap; it is a “Woolworth” age. Substitutes are offered and accepted, not only in the purely material order of food, clothing and building, but even in the spiritual order of thought, belief and morality; provided these look well (preferably with some pseudo-scientific backing), and are cheap, the many are content. The public outlook and the public conscience are, to a greater or less extent, diseased; and it is above all a disease of the mind. “Freedom of thought” men cry (and follow slavishly the childish vapourings of every new prophet of “freedom” that offers novelty); “no dogma, no authority” they insist (and bow to the infallible utterances of the self-styled scientist, of the newspaper proprietor, of the novelist, and of such charlatans as Mrs. Eddy). But the simple fact is that where there

EDITORIAL

is no truth there is no freedom; and this freedom which truth gives must be bought with a great price.

St. Dominic laboured himself, and founded his Order (of Priests, of Brothers, of Contemplative Nuns, of cloistered Tertiaries and of secular Tertiaries), to apply the remedy for this disease. His apostolate and theirs can be summed up in that profound injunction of the Apostle Paul: *Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus*. It has been said by blind critics that Dominic's Order is obsolete, that it was founded to combat a local heresy and should have been allowed to die a decent natural death after its mission was complete. But its mission will not be complete until the Pauline injunction is universally obeyed, and the apostolate of the Hounds of the Lord, with truth ablaze in their mouths, was never more urgently needed than it is to-day. As the Master General of the Dominicans has pointed out in his recent inspiring address to the secular Tertiaries of the Order assembled in Congress at Bologna, the spirit of St. Dominic and of his children is the spirit of Catholic Action, for Catholic Action is the apostolate of Catholic Truth. It is, of course, far wider than the Order of St. Dominic; it must embrace the whole membership of the Church. Nevertheless, though not all the faithful are called to wear the black and white of the Order of Preachers, all are called to share in the spirit of its Founder, to know, to defend, and to clothe their minds with the clear-cut black and white of Catholic Truth.

EDITOR.

ERRATUM

In the article on St. Thomas More, in our July issue (p. 487), for "Augustine of Tarsus" read "Theodore of Tarsus." The author apologizes to the readers of BLACK-FRIARS for what he describes as "a somewhat grotesque oversight."