

CORRESPONDENCE

PEACE.

To the Editor of BLACKFRIARS

SIR,—In BLACKFRIARS (December, page 888, and February, page 88) there is a quotation from St. Thomas relative to peace. The quotation (IIa, IIae, Q.183, a.2 ad.3) is as follows: 'Peace ceases when all seek what is their own.'

The latin words are: *Pax tollitur ex hoc quod cives singuli quae sua sunt quaerunt*. Now it is interesting to note that in the Leonine Edition of this part (from Q.123 to Q.189) of the IIa IIae, thirteen Codices are cited in the preparation of the text. Four codices have '*Pax tollitur*' (Peace ceases) and nine codices have '*Pax extollitur*' (Peace is extolled).

If the words written by St. Thomas were these: 'Peace is *extolled* when all seek what is their own,' the words can have a most true sense. If men seek and cherish and defend what is their own, and not seek to possess what belongs to another, peace is extolled. Nothing could do more for the preservation of peace if men acted in this wise. Not seeking to possess what belongs to others, implies essentially that men seek what is their own unselfishly, to the end that the rights of others are safeguarded.

In like manner if St. Thomas wrote: 'Peace *ceases* when all seek what is their own,' the true meaning is the same, since the obvious sense as judged from the context and from the implied reference to St. Paul's words: 'Seek not what is your own but that which is another's' (1 Cor., X, 24), is as follows: Do not seek what is your own selfishly, to the detriment of your neighbour and the common welfare, then there will be peace. To say that no one may seek, cherish, and defend what is his own is tantamount to the denial of a man's natural right to property.

'One's own' does not therefore mean *property* pure and simple, either in the text of St. Thomas or in that of St. Paul. It is quite by accident that what one seeks is one's property or not; the sense being: Whatsoever you seek, seek unselfishly, in charity and in justice. When St. Paul tells us to seek 'that which is another's,' he is obviously not talking of *property*, but of the *edification* of our neighbour in all our undertakings. If he meant *property* the sense would be: 'Don't seek what is your own since you possess that already, seek now to possess what belongs to your neighbour!'

The words then 'Peace ceases when all seek what is their own' may very easily lead people astray, if baldly stated without the essential qualification that alone gives them the meaning intended by St. Thomas and before him by St. Paul.

Peace ceases when all seek what is their own, *selfishly to the detriment of neighbour and of state*. The words italicised are the essential qualification.

I am, etc.,

ÆLRED WHITACRE, O.P.

REVIEWS

SPIRITUALITY

THE SPIRIT OF SAINT DOMINIC. By Humbert Clérissac, O.P.

Revised and edited with an Introduction by Father Bernard Delany, O.P. (Burns Oates; 6s.)

Father Humbert Clérissac, a former distinguished member of the French Dominican Province, is still remembered especially by those English Dominicans who heard the Retreat he preached to them at Hawkesyard thirty years ago. Though a Frenchman by birth and education he had a remarkable command of the English tongue, though in some ways the trace of accent and occasional oddity of idiom was an added attraction to his gifts as a preacher. Fortunately the text of those Retreat conferences was preserved and Father Delany, the present English Provincial, has revised and edited it with a delicacy of touch combined with reverence for the original that one has learnt to expect from this writer of fine English and former Editor of BLACKFRIARS. As he notes in his Introduction, Père Clérissac was filled with an absorbing and lifelong enthusiasm for St. Dominic and this is naturally at its keenest when he is addressing a group of his own Brethren, many of them still in the early stages of their religious life. His purpose, as he himself explains in his opening words, is 'to make a progressive study of the Dominican idea,' and this purpose he achieves so admirably that it would have been a great loss had his words not been committed to print and given to Catholics at large; for the Dominican idea, that is the spirit of St. Dominic, is a distinct and notable facet of the jewel of Christian spirituality and when expounded in so masterly yet simple a fashion as here, must prove of notable worth and a great practical help to all those who are concerned to possess themselves of the full treasure of the spiritual life.

HILARY J. CARPENTER, O.P.