

exercised a powerful influence over a group of Preachers who became the promoters of a reform movement amongst their brethren. After her death in 1380 at the age of thirty-three, her confessor and spiritual son, Raymund of Capua, having been elected Master General, laboured to restore the ancient discipline. Following Raymund of Capua and his collaborators we always call St. Catherine of Siena our mother.

Since we have compared our founder and our great doctor to the Eternal Father and the Word, we may well say that in the Dominican trinity she takes the part of the Holy Spirit. It would have been possible so to abuse Thomist intellectualism as to have been satisfied with a beautiful system, logically constructed, of mere philosophical and theological abstractions. The humble, noble-hearted woman whom the Holy Spirit overwhelms with His mystical favours helps us to preserve in the spirit of our Order the fervour of love which cleaves to reality, even to the reality of God. It is precisely this divine reality that must be born in us ; we must consecrate ourselves to it and we must bear witness to it before the world. St. Catherine gives us no encouragement to relegate to a secondary plane that pursuit of truth which St. Thomas, following St. Dominic, placed first. Like them, she is eminently intellectual and rational.

Many other saints, many other blessed and venerable persons, have defined and have lived the Dominican ideal between the thirteenth century and our own. We shall speak of many in the following pages. But it is more particularly to these three great souls that we must turn to discover the characteristics that should mark our life, the principles and sentiments that must guide our conduct, in short, all that constitutes what we call our spirit.

III. WHAT CONSTITUTES THE DOMINICAN SPIRIT ?

One word summarizes our spirit : it is the " motto " which appears at the top of the shield marked with the

black and white cross. *Veritas!* We are the knighthood of truth.

Others have *Pax* or *Caritas* or *Gloria Dei*. None of these is outside the orbit of the Dominican soul, but she will reach them by the way of truth: it is in the light of truth that she looks at everything. Truth sets off and quickens the elements that she shares with other Christian forms of spirituality. A thirst for truth will be the ruling sentiment of our soul.

When we sing the praises of our Father, in a noble hymn every night after returning from our procession to the altar of Our Queen and Lady, Mary, we call St. Dominic "light of the Church, doctor of the Truth": we say that he pours forth the water of wisdom and that his preaching diffuses grace. And if we add that he was a "rose of patience" and "ivory of chastity," these are but the accompaniments of his fundamental vocation to be a man dedicated to the truth. He espoused the faith as St. Francis espoused poverty.¹ Whereas St. Benedict wished that "nothing should take precedence of the divine praise," St. Dominic placed study in the forefront of his own life and of ours. St. Bruno forsook the schools to seek the wildest solitude and to shut himself up there: Dominic founded his priories and convents in the heart of the town and particularly in university centres to study and teach there. St. Bernard, like St. Augustine, wished his monks to spend much time in manual work: St. Dominic did not hesitate to suppress such labours entirely in order that spiritual work alone should be undertaken.

All ancient observances that he retained are subordinated and adapted to the pursuit of truth. Francis of Assisi, putting poverty above all else, reproved a young disciple who wished to study theology, on the ground that possession of the requisite books would entail unfaithfulness to holy poverty. Dominic, on the other hand, looks upon poverty as a release from temporal anxieties to

¹ Dante, *Paradiso*, XII, 61.

facilitate concentration upon study. Moreover, he authorizes his disciples to possess, as he did himself, the books which are the instruments of knowledge. Dominic, the former canon of Osma, attached though he was to choral prayer, nevertheless shortened the time set apart for the Divine Office to allow of more time for study.

Brother John of Navarre, who had known our Father intimately, solemnly deposed, during the process for his canonization, that both by word of mouth and by letter he often urged upon the friars continual study of theology and of the sacred Scriptures. St. Catherine of Siena in her *Dialogue* rejoices to hear the Eternal Father praise that love of science which characterizes the "barque" of Dominic. "Our Order is the first," said Humbert of Romans, "to have thus linked study to the religious life, *prius habuit studium cum religione conjunctum.*"¹

It is not the pleasure of cultivating our mind that underlies our intellectual efforts: it is love of Him Who is the Truth itself, it is the love of God. Dominic seeks God in the sacred books where He has revealed Himself. Always, as he trod the highways which lead to Rome, he turned in search of God to the infallible Master of sacred doctrine.

"What is God?" was the oft-repeated question of the little child in whom the Dominican vocation was beginning to awake, and who was to work until the end of his life to compile the *Summa* of what man can know on that divine subject. "Our spirit," said St. Thomas, "must strive unceasingly to know God more and more."²

St. Catherine of Siena bids us gaze upon God with a wide-open eye, the pupil of which is faith. Even simple Tertiaries should be relatively better instructed and more intellectual than other Christians, and assuredly no

¹ Humbert, *Opera*, t. II, p. 29.

² *De Trin.* II, 1, ad 7.

Dominican soul worthy of the name will ever prefer sentimental dreams to the certainties of the faith.

Study ought to upraise us towards God and lead us on to contemplate His perfections, His government and His activity within us. This contemplation will be the highest expression of that appreciation of truth which characterizes the Dominican soul. It must be attempted even by those who cannot make long and profound meditation. To help them St. Dominic instituted the Rosary, which places the contemplation of the Christian mysteries within the reach of everyone. As Père Lemonnier notes with pleasure in his book upon the Friars Preachers, it was by Masters of Theology that this splendid devotion was restored and propagated in the fifteenth century.¹

Although St. Dominic placed study above every other means, he did not wish liturgical prayer to be sacrificed to it. For he rightly recognized the divine Office as the chief method authoritatively established by the Church for raising the soul to God. Moreover, he was irresistibly attracted to it by his appetite for truth. The Office of the Choir, with High Mass as its centre, seemed to him a perfect harmony of rites and forms well calculated to foster those contemplative intuitions which study begets and which it is easy afterwards to prolong in private prayer. This theme we shall deal with more fully presently.

We shall also explain how this cherished truth, once known and lovingly contemplated, must influence our whole conduct. We must set ourselves with fervent zeal to live the truth, to spread the truth and to defend the truth.

Entirely taken up with God and with giving Him the first place in the realm of action as in the realm of prayer, and knowing himself only in God, in accordance with St.

¹ *Les Frères Prêcheurs*, p. 103.

Catherine's advice, a Dominican is wholly intent upon following the grace which God gives him through Jesus Christ Our Lord and Our Lady and Virgin Mary, in order to actualize his Creator's idea. The intellectual virtue of prudence, of which St. Dominic was such a shining example both in his own life and in the organization of his Order, and to which St. Thomas consecrated a long Treatise in his *Summa* (thus differing from other moralists who only give a few pages to the subject), and which St. Catherine, a worthy sister of St. Thomas, so strongly urges on us under the name of "*santa virtù della discrezione*"—prudence, I repeat, that is to say the just appreciation of how to regulate our conduct, plays a leading part in the life of a Dominican soul. St. Paul's words, "doing the truth in charity," might well serve as its motto.

Treading in the footprints of St. Dominic, who was ever ready to preach and defend the truth, affiliated to the Order of Preachers, whom the Pope, in approving them, styled "Champions of the faith and lights of the world," every Dominican, even those of the Third Order, will be eager to enlighten those who are deprived of the truth and also to avenge the truth when it is attacked.

Moreover, no one can be admitted to the Third Order until it is satisfactorily established that he is an orthodox Catholic and is zealous to promote and defend the truth of the faith to the best of his ability. Where these dispositions are lacking, there cannot be a Dominican vocation. And it is by developing them that we shall prove ourselves to be true sons of St. Dominic (II. 8).

Following the example of Our Lord on the night before His crucifixion, St. Dominic, as he lay dying, prayed for his children; and he promised that he would continue to pray for them on high. Our Patriarch's petition might almost be summed up in Our Lord's supreme prayer: "*Sanctifica eos in veritate*: Sanctify them in the Truth!"