

## BLACKFRIARS

struggles, tormenting and heart-rending. Van der Meer knows that there can be no relenting in the flight from Self.

Nevertheless, his unrest tears him from the rural peace of his Dutch homeland to the turmoil of Paris, where, now in real earnest, the anarchy in his soul brings him to the verge of destruction. But he has the good fortune to meet, besides many humbugs, some truly great and worthy men. Chief among them was Léon Bloy, whose clear-headedness and strength of faith, and still more the power of his artistic genius, made a deep and decisive impression upon him. So, at last, van der Meer finds his true course. Especially memorable was his first visit to the convent of the Benedictine nuns in the Rue Monsieur. But the search was not yet over. Van der Meer must still struggle with the torment of recurring doubt.

Then, suddenly, like the sun bursting through the clouds, dazzling us with its radiance, the long hidden truth burst forth from the darkness.

For man is good. And God will not fail to impart the might of His grace to him who sincerely toils to find the truth. So, after a hard struggle, van der Meer found the truth of our Church. Paris no longer holds allurements for him, nor power over him; now he can see only the human misery in her streets, the heart-piercing cry of human need. His love seeks only to tend the wounds with which men are smitten. From the depths of his soul ascends a hymn of thanksgiving such as only a sensible and intelligent man is capable of. The impression of this sense of gratitude, and the refreshing ingenuousness of the whole book, are the precious gifts that it offers to the reader.

F. R. KOE.

SHAW, GEORGE VERSUS BERNARD. By J. P. Hackett. (Sheed & Ward; 6s.)

Chesterton's G. B. Shaw was a full-dimensional human person and a writer of real human worth. The Shaw of this latest projection is only a ghost of a man and of a writer. Which means perhaps that the book has failed in part; but only in part. For it is a double purpose on which Mr. Hackett is set, to bless and to curse. He would bless the Bernard and curse the George of the G.B.S. combine. He concurs with Chesterton in regard and admiration for Bernard, the spontaneous, effective, imaginative Shaw-self. But he fails to make a living figure of him here; his Bernard remains only a vague hypostasis of a group of moral and intellectual virtues, amongst which courage, integrity, cogency, etc. Bernard needed delicate

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evoking. But George on the other hand needed only to be scientifically traced and sketched. George being the rational Shaw, the ratiocinative philosopher and theologian, interpreter and exemplifier of the Life Force of Creative Evolution. The delineation of George is excellent.

It is a very useful achievement to have fashioned this lively and well grounded account of the doctrinal state of Shaw's mind and of its historical formation. A pity that the shaping influence of the doctrine on the conduct and bearing of the man is not more fully shown. It can explain so much that is otherwise baffling. For instance, it largely explains the famous irresponsible clowning ways. While waiting for the next surging movement of the Life Force, to play the clown is quite appropriate behaviour: instead of prayer, a cockney irreverent waiting while the god stores up energy for the next offensive. Perhaps there was some fear lest the book should turn into a tract. But the style would have saved it from that. It is a dashing clever conversational style; especially clever if its rather monotonous stridency is *meant* to suggest the sounding brass timbre of the George Shaw philosophy.

RICHARD KEHOE, O.P.

THE EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF GOD IN THE SUMMA THEOLOGICA. By Thomas Gilby, O.P., S.T.L., Ph.D. (University of London.)

This syllabus of a course of University Extension Lectures for the coming scholastic year, covering the first twenty-six questions of the *Summa*, may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, 24 Primrose Hill Road, N.W.3.

St. Thomas held that reason, as distinct from religious faith and independently of any specifically religious experience, could develop a rational theology without which no reading of the world could satisfy the scientific intelligence. This view was shared by later thinkers, such as Descartes, Leibnitz and Locke, until Kant, probably the greatest single influence on modern philosophy of religion, came to undermine our confidence in the powers of the pure reason. Yet there has been a reaction against his dislocation of scientific and religious processes. Examination shows that it should never have been made. Kant's contribution to theology is valuable and lasting, but his criticism, though valid with respect to many crude theologisms, does not adversely affect the scientific theology of St. Thomas, in these days more than ever necessary to unify without distorting the variety of human knowledge.

F. v. S.