

BLACKFRIARS

in some respect, whether spiritual or intellectual, and the estimation of a total personality can only be made by taking an average. Where this falls heavily on the side of greatness, it is worthwhile to ask what bearing, if any, the moments of shrunken vision and crabbed action may have upon the whole. If this had been noted, the contributors to BLACKFRIARS would have seen that unornamented expressions like "the Baron's imprudence" and "inconsiderate importunity" were quite unfortunately rough, and that mere allusions to his saintliness change a living spirit into a biographical puzzle. The life story of a man like von Hügel is not a discontinuous jumble of pedestrian anecdotes and attitudes, but a constant growth where one event overlaps another and all are evaluated in terms of the whole. Here every moral contraction has its subsequent new expansion, whose specific tone and timbre are largely conditioned by the former. An objective statement must indicate this for every important incident. For each one is a dramatic and tragic unity in itself, in virtue of both the light and the shadow and the shadow shrinking before the light.

I am, Sir,

Yours, etc.,

NORBERT DREWITT, O.P.

"WORKERS' OWNERSHIP"

SIR,—Mr. Eric Gill's letter in the November 1937 number of BLACKFRIARS has evidently been misunderstood—so I have found through conversations with various people. It seems that, unless what he expressed is made quite clear, he will again be at the mercy of opponents who will accuse him of being an out-and-out Communist. To quote Mr. Gill's letter, he says: "If it is good for me to own my own workshop, why shouldn't it be good for Railwaymen to own a Railway?" He did not say that they do own the Railway—"At present it (G.W.R.) is the legal possession of the shareholders"—but he said that the workers should own it. Why? Because they—the workers—do the work, and they are responsible for any hitch, technical and otherwise—"And their demand is entirely in line with what I've always said—that the man who does the work should be responsible for it and there can be no responsibility where there is no ownership."

This is not of Communist origin. It was held as far back as the days when Artificers' Guilds were existing.

Mr. Gill points out that the shareholders are only impersonal beings, as such, "drawing dividends, if any," when any industrial enterprise is floated. It is the workers from the managers downwards who are personally doing the specified work. They

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are responsible—personally responsible—for all that goes on.

The *Rerum Novarum* says, quoting Holy Writ: "It is better that two should be together than one; for they have the advantage of their society. If one fall he shall be supported by the other. Woe to him that is alone, for when he falleth he hath none to lift him up." And further: "A brother that is helped by his brother is like a strong city." Yes, let the workers and shareholders own together, but the shareholders must do a share of the work so that, "the notion of *person* is included in any complete theory of property": so that the shareholders as owners, and not as money lenders, are personally responsible for the work.

Again, I have been informed that if Mr. Gill's idea was put into being, the men would be owners of—presuming they are factory hands—machinery, sub-human machinery. But Mr. Gill was not writing about machinery being sub-human or not, and he was not discussing whether the G.W.R. should be abolished or not, nor whether it is a sub-human organization; he was merely talking about "collective ownership"—the workers' right to workers' ownership: ". . . the question is: Who shall own it? . . ."

Yours, etc.,

GERARD R. B. SHELDON.

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THEOLOGY AND RELIGION

THE PEOPLE OF GOD. By Dom Anscar Vonier, O.S.B. (Burns, Oates; 5s.)

This book is not a treatise *De Ecclesia*, nor even one on the *Mirabilis Vita*—its scope is not apologetic. But it treats of the Church under the appellation of "The People of God," a notion which helps us to form a more complete conception of the nature of the assembly of Christ's faithful (p ix), and helps Christians to realize that they are God's People, that all that was said to Israel: "I will take you to myself for my people. I will be your God" (Ex. vi, 7) is now more true and more completely true of the body of Christians in the Church (p. 23). The notion of "Church" is completed with the idea of "People" (p. 115). We are enabled also through the notion of a "people" to see in a more satisfying proportion the succession of prosperity and failure in the assembly of those who are God's own (p. 18), and better to appreciate their dependence on God. The idea of a people extends the activities and influence of the Church, with all the conception of a "divine nationhood," and that sense of spiritual sovereignty which seems to have as a first and immediate result what we might truly call the right political apprecia-