

critics, and the like,' to create a Christian *speculum mentis* of apparently democratic character. Theology will perhaps be somewhat privileged; I am not sure. In any case it 'must be related to and illuminated by the wider setting of man's knowledge of the universe in which it will occupy its appropriate position, but also to which it gives ultimate meaning.'

I note briefly three major errors in Mr. Nash's judgments on Thomism: (1) that it admits no new facts; (2) that it considers the human reason a perfect machine for infallibly finding truth; (3) that it makes a fundamental distinction between *psyche* and *pneuma* in the human individual. The most cogent refutation of these positions is to be found in St. Thomas himself, but answers couched in more modern terms are available in plenty. For Mr. Nash's specific difficulties I should recommend the works of Maritain cited above, the *Sens du mystère* of Garrigou-Lagrange, and Father D'Arcy's *Thomas Aquinas and Nature of Belief*.

I have stressed adverse criticisms because the author's pretensions asked to be challenged. It is only fair to add that the book has much of interest in it, shows sense and acuteness at many points, and should disturb the complacency of scientists of the Wellsian kind.

WALTER SHEWRING.

BRIDGE INTO THE FUTURE. Letters of Max Plowman. Edited by D.L.P. (Andrew Dakers; 25s.)

In one of these letters Max Plowman says: 'I can express ideas easily and happily in letters to intimate friends; but when I come to the formal expression of them then a veil comes down between me and the paper and I find myself trying to write in epigrams or else writing with a kind of loose irrelevancy that is like the trickle of skimmed milk.' I incline to share the second judgment (the two books which had come my way before were certainly disappointing); I am happy to share the first also. These letters show Plowman at his best, and their seven-hundred-odd pages are an excellent introduction to him in all those activities for which he came to be known—as pacifist, as interpreter of Blake, as editor of the *Adelphi*, and as founder of the Langham agricultural community.

The book is bound to make one admire the man; courage, sincerity, affection, intelligence are visibly impressed on it. Yet there is much in him that I still do not understand. In a small way, for instance, I am puzzled by his verdict on the *Testament of Beauty* as 'probably the greatest book that's been printed in my lifetime'; I should think the opinion odd in anyone, but I find it specially odd in him—the rest of his critical opinions do not prepare one for it. More importantly, his intense distrust of the Catholic Church seems hard to explain completely. 'It is known by its fruits—which are horrid!' The sentiment is familiar, but it comes strangely from a profoundly religious man who venerated English cathedrals and

Italian churches not as mere art-works but as expressions of vital faith; who once said, ' St. Theresa knew more about real marriage than 9,999 of married women ' ; who had a particular admiration for Gerard Hopkins and Eric Gill. I think he kept something of the prejudices of his Plymouth Brethren ancestors—an excessive suspicion of ' outward forms ' and a feeling that if you have a crucifix on your wall you are unlikely to have Christ in your heart. Then too he was steeped in Blake, whom I venture to call a good servant but bad master in things of the mind; from him perhaps he derived or nourished the conviction that truth had no value except as personally discovered by experience and imagination; hence a natural alienation from the position of *fides quaerens intellectum*. Finally, by his very temperament he took unkindly to any organisation; as an officer he chafed at the Army; as a pacifist he found it hard to bear with the Peace Pledge Union; in the same way, though agnostic friends thought him too Christian, he could not reconcile himself to the Christian Church. And I feel that these obstacles to his vision of Christianity were also obstacles to the complete achievement of many aims—spiritual, intellectual and social—for which he specially strove.

These are criticisms, not condemnations. I repeat that to read the book should make one admire the man, and that on page after page there are things in it from which Catholics ought to learn. To end with, here are some varied quotations.

(In the Army, 1915.) ' I've been to church. [Vaughan] Williams sat next me and went to sleep. I wish I was Williams—but the *organist* drove *him* mad, so we were level again.'

(On psycho-analysts.) ' Seeing they can't get to fundamentals and say " God is love," they have to stop short and say " Life is sex," and so long as they are stuck there the soul eludes them and they are haunted by "behaviour" problems and they think all infants are alike . . .'

' The finest qualities of a man are usually those which tend to keep him within sight of the workhouse, while those which we all stigmatise as "rotten" are usually of distinct commercial value.'

' He [Bernard Shaw] may be hollow, but he's a bell that always rings clear.'

' Blow me if apocalyptic Christianity ever exploited " other-worldliness " like the modern Marxian. No matter how much heaven might be the home of the other-worldliness Christianity, at least the creature going to it was permitted to be a human unit, and modern Socialism of the modernest type can't concede him that, so devoured is it with a coming millennial glory!'

' We stand at the cross-roads. Either the personal ethic is maintained at all cost, in the assurance that if so maintained it must ultimately become the social ethic. Or the personal ethic goes down before the vicious social ethic—not immediately, of course—there is a period of double-mindedness—but ultimately the demand of circum-

stances will see to it that the man's ethic is congruous, so that, with the best will in the world, people find themselves *obliged* to do heinous things, merely because they accepted a philosophy which put the cart before the horse.'

WALTER SHEWRING.

MOIRA: FATE, GOOD, AND EVIL IN GREEK THOUGHT. By William Chase Greene. (Harvard University Press and Humphrey Milford; 28s.)

This elaborate study is equally remarkable for the thoroughness of its classical scholarship and the superficiality of its philosophy. In its documentation of Greek sources it leaves nothing to be desired. Zeus and Fate, human prosperity and divine jealousy, the sentiments of extremest pessimism ('it were best never to have been born'), the counsels of endurance, the notions of a Golden Age, the antithesis of *physis* and *nomos*—these and other such themes are tracked through Greek literature and marked for reference in an excellent and ingenious index which provides ready answers to such questions as 'What had Pindar to say of *hubris*?' or 'What idea of *nemesis* was entertained by Homer, Theognis, Herodotus, the tragedians?' In his examination of particular passages Professor Greene weighs and marshals expert conclusions and is able on occasion to refute the interpretation of such an authority as A. E. Taylor. The summaries and paraphrases of relevant texts include some passages (e.g. those from Antiphon the sophist, pp. 232-239, and from *Anonymus Iamblichii*, p. 251), which are not easily accessible elsewhere. All this makes the book a most valuable work of reference, and as such I greatly recommend it.

For philosophical judgment of ideas Professor Greene has neither the training nor the capacity. The Greeks themselves, broadly speaking, were badly muddled over the matters in question. They had early lost touch with the Indo-European tradition and could make no serious intellectual use of the residue of primitive myth which more 'barbarous' peoples have understood more fully. It was left to a few great philosophers to regain more or less privately a metaphysical conception of the universe which has greatly served posterity but which for the Greeks in general—the heroes of the 'Greek miracle' of popular propaganda—was, and remained, unattainable. The dilemmas of common Greek thought are faithfully registered by Professor Greene. The solutions of Plato and Aristotle are discussed at a level which fails to do them justice. It would take too long to substantiate this criticism. I will merely note that Professor Greene is seriously impressed by Royce's remark, 'The best world for a moral agent is one that needs him to make it better' ('This little sentence really says everything,' p. 7); that he recommends to would-be students of mysticism the Jamesian classic, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (p. 49); that he attributes to St. Thomas the belief that this is the best of all possible