

BLACKFRIARS

—of self-mutilation, of contempt of creatures, of renunciation and sacrifice and suffering—and the real and therefore satisfying answers given in the easy and exciting manner which the dialogue-form makes possible. It should be in every Catholic library; it is pre-eminently a book to lend to any non-Catholic who is at all interested in Catholic ideals. To pick out quotations is impossible, for every paragraph is important; the pith of the essay's argument, which is worked out in a discussion of the life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, is in these lines:

'And I maintain that the way to Divine love is not spiritual self-mutilation . . . but that the gift of human love is a mirror . . . the plainest in which to see what our love of God might be; the alphabet from which, like children learning to read, we spell out the language we should speak to God.'

L.S.G.V.

LA RELIGION D'AMOUR. By Dom Gaspar Lefebvre, O.S.B.
(Abbaye de St. André; 2 fr. 50.)

As yet the liturgical movement has scarcely begun in this country, and many fight shy of it because they fear that it is principally an affair of rubric idolatry, long services and archaeology. This is a profoundly false notion, due perhaps in some measure to the excesses of some of its advocates. In essence it is a dogmatic movement, an attempt to teach the faithful how to live the full Christian life as it should issue from the Christian dogmas, with a special insistence on their corporate and social implications. This little book is an attempt to work out certain aspects of this theological basis. The author is already known to English readers by his admirable book *The Catholic Liturgy*, and they will welcome the more thorough treatment of certain points than was there possible. Beginning with a discussion of the nature of religion itself (the treatise is explicitly Thomist throughout), Dom Lefebvre goes on to consider what is specific to the Christian religion, the fact that all its actions reach God through and with and in Christ the Son of God and the Priest of God. Through the grace of Christ and the theological virtues we become the adopted sons of God and

REVIEWS

worship Him filially. Through the sacramental characters we share in Christ's priesthood and in His priestly worship. Being configured to Christ implies a repetition in ourselves of His death and resurrection, death to sin, life to God, here and now. That is the Christian spiritual life. We can achieve it through active participation in the Mass, making it our daily interior sacrifice in union with Christ's—the Mass which St. Vincent Ferrer calls 'the highest work of contemplation.' This is an outline of a work which should do much to remove false impressions about the liturgy, above all the impression that being public and 'official' it cannot be personal and is therefore inferior to 'mental' prayer. It demands, of course, the most intense 'mental' prayer and in the Mass an even more perfect interior self-oblation.

A.M.

THE QUESTION AND THE ANSWER. By Hilaire Belloc. (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co.; Science and Culture Series; pp. vii, 94; \$1.25.)

Mr. Belloc enters an unfamiliar inn when he sits down to convert America, and as suits a stranger in the bar, argues quietly and listens with politeness to his opponents. The converted may sigh for the 'lusty blows' and the 'emphatic Belloc' of the ludicrous 'blurb'; but this prose, exact and controlled even for Mr. Belloc, is justly chosen for his purpose.

The question—What is Man?—is answered with the question, *Utrum Deus sit*, and the opponent disarmed at once with a Thomist 'Does God exist? Apparently not.' The classical proofs are rather hidden in a charming refutation of those philosophasters who have denied causality, or the validity of thought, or attributed consciousness to matter (where the old Belloc raps on the desk for attention with 'the great Lucretius . . . and the absurd Haeckel, of our own time.') But there is a army of Doubters, more numerous and more reputable, sceptical of the sensible world itself: it is unfortunate that this Epistle to the Sceptics dismisses them with a glorious, 'These things we know. To say we do not know them is nonsense.' This is no better than Johnson's 'Thus I refute it,' and we like