

Under the more or less informed and prejudiced eye of an alumnus indeed, the book will now and then (though hardly by and large) find itself at a disadvantage, as Dom Hubert's chosen memories rather than his own unfold. It was rash of the author to term a certain period 'undistinguished'; perhaps the characterization is just, but Downside's most recent war memorial by itself shows how Gregorians of that generation could rise to an occasion when it came, and there are survivors who have made their mark. Even while at school—was Dom Hubert's eye otherwise occupied just then?

A persistent search for the *res Gregoriana* hardly succeeds in discovering the recipe. For this no lack of knowledge or affection is responsible. It may be that an essential ingredient necessarily eludes any deliberate pursuit. If one who was born as a Gregorian out of due time, but shared the experience of the original 1814 party in coming from the direction of Shrewsbury, may venture an opinion, a sublime unconcern with the quiddity of the *res Gregoriana* is a notable characteristic. Previous literary chapters in the record having failed to alter this, one hopes that Dom Hubert's entertaining volumes will have no more serious result.

IVO THOMAS, O.P.

THE PERENNIAL ORDER. By Martin Versfeld. (Society of St Paul; 18s.)

This book about philosophy by a convert to Catholicism, who lectures in the University of Capetown, will arouse the interest not only of those who know South Africa, but of everyone who is interested in the *philosophia perennis*. The idea of order was a favourite one of St Thomas; the wise man puts things in order; there is hierarchy of order in creation, an inter-relationship in the scale of being between the highest and the lowest. This would seem to be the central theme of the book around which are grouped the main theses of the thomistic philosophy. Having made his metaphysical foundations secure by dealing with the object of philosophy, the author is able to make use of the method of modern philosophers in his approach to man and his experience. There are chapters on the relation of philosophy to science, morals, history, art and culture. Even the chapters on medieval Catholic culture and on the philosophy of history, which are incidental to the main purpose of the book, rely on fundamental principles and show how they can be applied. The author's knowledge of modern philosophers and his ability to use them in a particular context, though he may fundamentally disagree with their principles, is remarkable. Whether he is dealing with Bergson, Whitehead, Lloyd Morgan or Alexander, one cannot fail to be impressed with his sound judgment. One has the impression of great fairness in his criticism of plausible opinions. They are stated simply and without distortion.

Perhaps the great advantage of the book is for the beginner who has no technical philosophical training, though hard-boiled thomists will find it stimulating. The book is not so much a textbook as an introduction to the necessity and value of thomist principles in the modern chaos. Dr Versfeld is a born teacher and has evidently thought things out for himself. That is why he is able to express traditional truths, like the existence of God and the Incarnation, and their consequences in various fields of thought, in so fresh and original a way. One cannot help thinking that his environment and his natural versatility have helped him in the writing of so attractive a book. One finds oneself thinking of the peace of the lovely Cape farms or the crystalline air of the Karoo and remembering that the author is farmer, angler, botanist, a lover of nature familiar with trees and butterflies. All this helps with apt metaphor and example. The light, easy and lucid style, and the gift of catching and holding the reader's interest in problems that call for deep thinking should help young South Africans to think clearly about their country's difficult social and political problems.

WILFRID ARDAGH, O.P.

JOHN BUNYAN. By Roger Sharrock. (Hutchinsons University Library; 8s. 6d.)

Mr Sharrock's carefully detailed analysis of Bunyan's personality, development, historical setting and literary influence will probably interest the general reader most in that it shows the genesis of that great legend of *The Pilgrim's Progress* which, diffuse or piecemeal, anonymous or known, illuminates so much of the imaginative life of those who speak English. Generations have come to it, first hand or second, as an adventure or a religious entertainment; through *Little Women* and *Mrs Overthway's Remembrances*; through John Buchan's noble thrillers; through the gentle cadences of 'He that is down need fear no fall', the more dogged rhythm of 'Who would true valour see', of the music of Vaughan Williams; through chance phrases, and the trumpet quotation in wartime obituaries. Here it is, as it was written, its theological structure clearly shown, its relation to Bunyan's self and to his external adventures ably drawn, its place mapped out among his many works, and its debts set down to earlier and to contemporary literature. As to the last, would it have been too much of a side issue to discuss what connection may exist between the mapping out of the Pilgrim's Progress and the passion which appeared in other parts of seventeenth-century Europe to express in cartographical terms the landscape of the mind; compare in the temporal sphere, the *Conte du Pays du Tendre*.