

both interests and instructs his reader, rare qualities in a critic. The link with the tragedies might have been forged more strongly, for resurrection does not annul the conflict between good and evil and the fulfilment in *kenosis* itself is an important element in both tragedy and high comedy. While one feels that more might have been made of ambivalence and the intrusion of the 'unredeemed world' in the miracle plays as factors in Shakespeare's inheritance, one feels on the other hand that in matters of detail Mr Bethell tends to be 'plus royaliste que le Roi'. Not all ritual symbolism refers to the Mass and we are not always convinced that 'grace' possesses the explicitly Christian meaning.

The last chapter, 'Conclusion', also raises doubts. So long as we think of nature and supernature as in a horizontal and not a vertical relationship we shall find tension and not balance in the Middle Ages. Only a belief in the interpenetration of nature and grace can be responsible for (*pace* Mr C. S. Lewis) St Thomas's treatment of married *love*, for St Louis of France (a saint and a man happily fulfilled in marriage), for William Langland's determination after fifteen years to finish his poem and pursue Saint Truth (cf. N. Coghill, *The Pardon of Piers Plowman*). These and many more facts of history incline one to agree with Mr E. I. Watkin rather than with the less optimistic historians. That however most emphatically does not lead one to mistrust the critic who finds the desired optimism in Shakespeare; but it does mean that the optimism is Shakespeare's inheritance and not his discovery. Beyond all this Mr Bethell remains a critic of the highest rank.

G.M.

COMPANION TO THE STUDY OF SHAKESPEARE. MACBETH. By Rev. Reginald F. Walker, C.S.Sp., M.A. (Browne & Nolan; 2s.)

In presenting yet another study of Shakespeare, the author need give no apology, even if its object were not so different from all former essays. Anything that helps our literary and dramatic appreciation of the immortal playwright will always find a welcome. In this cheap and well-produced study, the mature critic, the university student, the secondary schoolboy, and above all, the teacher will find many new angles of character interpretation—that alone justifies the present little volume.

But the author, himself a teacher in one of Ireland's largest secondary schools, has come along to supply a longfelt want, the need to study our Shakespeare as it is—a vehicle of Catholic thought, philosophy and right living. 'It is safe to say that there is not a single Shakespearean drama in school use which is not capable of yielding some of the most profitable principles of right living'.

It is the author's intention to show us such principles in this and in the other works of Shakespeare which he proposes to study. How far this aim has been achieved in the present volume may be seen in that simultaneous unfolding of character, and application of moral

and philosophic principles which are bound to contribute immensely to the moral formation of youth.

Father Walker is to be congratulated on the noble task he has set himself: we wish him every success. Already we are in his debt for this study of Macbeth.

M. COSTELLOE

THE BHAGAVADGITA. By Professor Sir S. Radhakrishnan. (Allen & Unwin; 10s. 6d.)

This is yet another good translation of the Bhagavadgita. But that is not the important fact about it. The point is this: Professor Radhakrishnan has lived in England for a long time, and he has realised the gap in our knowledge about this great Indian Scripture. So he gives in 78 pages an Introductory Essay that has been badly needed in the West.

What is the Gita? A religious classic. 'The teaching of the Gita is not presented as a metaphysical system thought out by an individual thinker or school of thinkers. It is set forth as a tradition which has emerged from the religious life of mankind'. The Gita belongs to the pre-Christian era. Professor Radhakrishnan quotes the chief commentaries on the Gita: Samkara's ancient commentary (788-822 A.D.) holds that 'while action is essential as a means for the purification of the mind, when wisdom is attained action falls away'. Ramanya, another old commentator, holds that its main emphasis is on devotion; differences are shown as determined by the view-point adopted.

The Gita presents Krisna, the teacher, as identified with Visnu, the Lord of the Sun. 'The unity that lies behind the manifold universe, the changeless truth, is represented by Krisna, who takes manhood into God. Krisna is the unification between the eternal and the historical. There is no antithesis between eternity and time in the Gita. Time derives from eternity and finds fulfilment in it'. The eternal 'I' confronts the pseudo-eternal 'not-I'. 'When the element of negation is introduced into the Absolute, its inwardness is unfolded in the process of becoming. The two principles of being and non-being are shown in the Gita, although this teaching does not uphold dualism, because non-being depends on being.

Three different ways bring men to the Supreme Goal: the way of knowledge (Inana—wisdom, mind); the way of love (Bhakti); and the way of action (Karma). Arjuna, representing man in the Gita, is guided through all these ways. Professor Radhakrishnan agrees with the old commentary of Samkara: Karma and Bhakti are both means of spiritual freedom.

Regarding the translation itself, as I am not able to translate the original Sanskrit, I can only compare some of the modern translations. My personal impression is that, in some ways, Professor Radhakrishnan's rendering could be less intellectual and give us more of the atmosphere of this Scripture. Here is an example. Sloka 51 in Chapter XI is translated as follows: