

he was a deeply pious man, at the same time. It is in his doctrine of Nature that this piety is most evident. He describes his own vocation in these words,

‘It behoves me to describe natural things so that many secrets may become known. Then may the physician prepare the fifth essence of gold and put to shame Avicenna the Sophist and his followers. Great are the virtues of Nature. Who is so thirsty as to work out all her virtues? For these are from God’s wisdom which is infinite.’

As Dr Pagel points out, Paracelsus believed that ‘Nature constitutes, however inadequately, a visible reflection of the invisible work of God. Nature has provided signs by means of which God has graced us with glimpses into his secret wisdom and “magnalia”.’

‘In matters eternal it is Belief that makes all works visible, in matters corporeal it is the light of Nature that reveals things invisible.’

Nevertheless, like many of the Renaissance figures affected by Ficinian Neo-Platonism—and Paracelsus admired Ficino as the type of the Priest-Physician—he ventured into a Pantheist position on some matters. The ‘virtues’ and ‘forces’ which Paracelsus saw informing all material things he took to be un-created, not natural but supernatural. Dr Pagel has clearly shown in the latter part of his book that Paracelsus’s ideas derive from Gnostic and Cabbalistic sources. He was the inheritor of Joachim of Fiore’s teaching and of the Lullian ‘Art’. All this combined with a shrewd common-sense, careful observation and an unusual gift of healing. A lucid key to Paracelsus’s sources, as well as to the strange terminology he used and which is so bewildering, is one of Dr Pagel’s most valuable contributions.

He makes no attempt to play down Paracelsus’s undoubted eccentricity, his violent quarrels, strange pride and aggressive temperament. But he does show that much of his originality is due to a refusal to compromise, a certain integrity. Paracelsus believed in travel, Nature’s book, and was as much at home in mining districts and mineral spas, which always fascinated him, as in universities. The journeyman scholar, the field surgeon, the inspired interpreter of Nature—all these aspects of Paracelsus are shown as parts of the whole picture. Perhaps his chief interest for us is that he was among the last splendid examples of men who never thought of separating Science and Religion, Nature and Faith.

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THE MASS AND THE ENGLISH REFORMERS. By C. W. Dugmore. (Macmillan; 30s.)

The first half of this book is an elaboration of the thesis, first adumbrated by Batiffol, that there were in the Church of the fifth century two distinct theories concerning the Eucharist. The ‘materialist’

conception of our Lord's presence is first found in Ambrose, gradually degenerated into the 'crude materialism' of the scholastics, and was imposed on the western Church by the 'papal curia'. The 'spiritual' conception, which the author implies is the true one, is first clearly distinguishable in Augustine. These contradictory theories apparently coexisted without friction or controversy, or a word of mention in a general council, till the time of Berengarius, when the true one was driven underground by the said papal curia, till rediscovered independently by Luther and Cranmer. The method of proof is to string together quotations from the Fathers, inevitably out of their context, and not made more reliable by freedom in translating. Thus 'species' is translated by 'characters' (p. 18), 'thing' (p. 19) and 'nature' (p. 29). Later commentators are cited in profusion: some are right and some are wrong—only one is 'absolutely right'—according to whether or not they approximate to the views of the author. This method leads to such smug sentences as the following, apropos of St Thomas: 'The neglect of symbolism and the minimizing of realism are twin dangers which have ever beset the Church, and even her greatest sons are not always proof against both.' (p. 49.) One may reasonably ask, who is to judge? These early chapters have been answered in anticipation by a host of writers, including some non-Catholics, and a sufficient summary will be found in the *Dictionnaire Apologétique*. The latter part of the book is a more detailed study of eucharistic doctrine in Reformation England. Here the author bears witness to the utter confusion of thought amongst Cranmer and his friends once they had cut themselves off from the universal Church. They not only contradicted each other but they contradicted themselves again and again, so that it is impossible to arrive at any clear idea of what any of them thought or meant. The author warns us against the danger of labels and proceeds to invent his own. Gardiner is a 'papist-Catholic' (occasionally a 'papal-Catholic') and Cranmer is a 'reformed-Catholic'. But as the author nowhere tells us what he means by a Catholic these sub-species only add to the confusion. The chapter on the Second Prayer-Book shows that Cranmer was driven by Parliament to a position far more extreme than he would have preferred. 'Cranmer had to allow very substantial concessions to be made to the radical Reformers, but it does not follow that he interpreted the rite of 1552 in exactly the same sense as they did, or that he welcomed all the changes made.' (p. 171.) After such an admission, is it of any use to look for a coherent theology in his writings? Does it matter whether he was a willing or an unwilling tool in the hands of the extremists? The result was a compromise that satisfied nobody, and has since led to perplexity, restlessness and defection.

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