

a-dozen cardinal bishops and makes no mention of any election procedure of any kind as we would understand the word, it is apparent Father Hughes had never read it. At the end of the middle ages we are told Hus's heresy was manifest: not any more it isn't. Father Hughes seems to find his martyrdom commonplace and is puzzled about why the Czechs made such a fuss. But he is properly forthright about the death of Savonarola and the pope's part in what he rightly calls a monstrous perversion of justice. But the pope was Alexander VI and even triumphalists could be rude about him.

Scholarship had something to do with the revolution inadvertently set off by John XXIII and Vatican II, and it has in the years since the Council thrown off the

JUST MEN by Gordon Rupp. *Epworth Press*, London 1977. 181 pp.

£2.75

The Dixie Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Cambridge strikes one as the very best kind of ecumenist. The passionate particularity with which he belongs to his own (Classical Reformed and Methodist) line of spiritual ancestry is precisely what sharpens and gives interpretative power to his wide-ranging sympathies of the heart for a host of christian men in a variety of traditions. The combination of the particular and the universal is presented quite devastatingly in the frontispiece to his *Festschrift Christian Spirituality* which shows him as President of the Methodist Conference dressed in the frock-coat of a nineteenth century Anglican archdeacon and standing before an altar positively dripping with Baroque monstrances. Truly, all things to all men!

The essays Professor Rupp has gathered together in this volume purport to be a series of 'set-piece orations' on figures in the history of Christendom: one Late Antique Christian, one Mediaeval, five studies of Reformation heroes (including half an essay on an anti-hero, More), one Augustan and three Victorians. Looking slightly closer, the diversity of scope they offer and the diversity of method he has used seem more striking than any unified attempt to revive a traditional 'art-form' as the publisher puts it. Contrast, for instance, the piece on Luther with the opening essay on Benedict of Nursia. Rupp's dozen pages on Luther are academically the finest thing in the book, and offer a

kind of inhibitions and restrictions by which Philip Hughes was bound. Without a massive apostasy from decent critical standards and scholarly honesty, the study of Church History can never go back to pre-conciliar compromises. This is why it has a value over and above the particular interest of a particular study by a particular historian. It is a safeguard against the kind of Church Mgr. Lefebvre would like to lock us up in, and, perhaps more importantly, the rather different kind of Church the disciples of Dr. Kung would prefer. But the passage of time and the tide of scholarship have killed this book stone dead.

ERIC JOHN

nutshell appraisal of the current state of Luther studies, contextualised as these now are in a far closer analysis of late mediaeval catholicism and of Reformation radicalism than the old apologetic histories could muster. (It reminds the reader who has followed Rupp's work that he emerged almost overnight as a major interpreter of the Reformation by his little book *Martin Luther, Hitler's Cause—or Cure?* produced from the decent suburban obscurity of a Chislehurst manse to counter a war-time propagandist who had traced to Luther the trauma of the German soul.) The essay on Benedict, on the other hand, looks like one of those dreadful cloying sweetmeats the English offer each other as formal courtesies on ecumenical occasions: a panegyric along the lines of 'Benedict the Patron of Europe' with the obligatory comparisons of the Benedict of Gregory's *vita* to a Harrovian prefect on the run from school with (improbably) his Nannie, and so forth. But to penetrate rather deeper to the structures of comparison which underlie Rupp's various manners and tones of voice, there is a real, and highly instructive, unity in what he has to say.

What Rupp has tried to do in these vignettes is to give us a sense of christian revelation through the prism of the lives of a group of christian heroes, and to let us see its coherence at the level of the experience of grace, even when the dogmatic expression of that experience (which he rightly regards as vital for the christian life of the

mind) differs widely. The best place to begin the book is at the end, for in his study of Hopkins Rupp invites us to re-read *The Wreck of the Deutschland* as displaying the ultimate unity of evangelical and Catholic Christianity in language which is "from a theological point of view a miracle of communication, for it puts the whole view of salvation in Paul, Augustine and Luther into a poem which entirely avoids the vocabulary of theology". Hopkins' anguished celebration of the God who is mastery and mercy can set up for Rupp filaments of contact with the stress on self-surrender rather than self-conquest in the *Rule* of Benedict which is, he insists, not a Christian Torah: if it is a highway code it is set to music, its statutes have become songs". Mind you, even Rupp's catholicity of temperament must balk at some of his Reformation subjects, and if it is right to see him as primarily concerned with an analysis of holiness this may indicate why the embarrassed brevity of the essay on Knox closes with a line about the trumpets sounding as he passed over which would not be out of place among those obituary verses which the editors of local evening papers preserve for their more imaginative clients. By contrast, the superb evocation of Francis of Assisi succeeds by interpreting the early Franciscans quite apart from the sentimental exaltation of gospel over

DE TRISTITIA CHRISTI by St. Thomas More, Vol 14; Part I, pp. 1-691; Part II, pp. 695-1192. Yale University Press, 1976 £43.20

Libraries that subscribe to this superb edition of the complete works of St. Thomas More will not wait for reviews. Librarians will already have received this latest volume and will have satisfied themselves that the high standards of scholarship and production have been sustained. This review is offered to those devoted to our great saint, who cannot afford an edition of such magnitude but would like to have just one volume as a great treasure and luxury. Without a shadow of hesitation it is this volume that I would recommend. This is by far the most intimate book on St. Thomas that has ever appeared. First, it is the only work of the saint of which we have the original text in his own hand. The editors have reproduced the whole of it in facsimile and we can watch the writer at work. He writes at

law which ruins so many well-meaning Protestant enquiries into the forms of Catholic holiness. If the Spirit is removed, he well says, what has begun as Gospel may end as Law (thus the embittered 'zelanti', the 'Spirituals'); and what might seem to be the Law may become the Gospel if it is the vehicle of the Spirit (hence the apparent accommodators could be fruitful for the church in Anthony of Padua and Bonaventure).

Professor Rupp believes that he is an individualist in a strong sense. What excites him about the historical study of great men, he says, is the 'X' in their equation, the point where they cease to be explained by heredity and environment and the thought world of their contemporaries, and this he identifies with Matthew Arnold's metaphor for genius, the mountain open to the skies. His practice is better, perhaps, than his ontology of personhood, for he sees his giants not just straddling the hills but stepping forward mightily to thrust back the limits of their world for the sake of the christian ecclesia at large. These studies offer us his insight into the historical process as open to a dimension of transcendence which is not just that of the individual genius over his society, but the presence in the midst of time of the glory of the ever greater God.

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high speed with many abbreviations and corrections. The corrections are not part of a leisurely revision but were made before the ink was dry and reveal a mind working even faster than his pen. Hardly has he written a word before he thinks of a better one and makes a hasty alteration. St. Thomas' Latin works, for all their homely examples, often have indications of fastidious polish; but here we see him at work and are convinced that the polish was not a revision of a first draft but part of his normal technique. Secondly, this is a commentary on Our Lord's agony in the Garden, when he was bracing Himself for his passion and death. St. Thomas too was preparing for his passion, for this work was written during those long, lonely months in the Tower while he awaited execution. It is an intimate revelation of