deliberately restricted his subject to the public life of Christ—a manageable and limited one—and for that reason his argument emerges with strength and authority.

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE SCULPTURE. By John Pope-Hennessy. (Phaidon Press; 90s.)

Twenty-two years ago a review in BLACKFRIARS prophesied that Mr Pope-Hennessy would become one of the most distinguished art historians of his time. By now he should be recognized as the greatest among them. He has synthesized the scientific expertise and detailed perceptions of the great Dr Saxl with a very English tradition of lucid prose and reluctant generalization. Here he is discussing the development of Italian sculpture from Donatello to Tullio Lombardo. The 144 plates and 165 text illustrations are of course admirably selected and superbly photographed; only a complete mastery of the subject could make his style so limpid.

Inevitably there are interpretations with which an individual reviewer may disagree. I am not so convinced as he is of 'the life-giving breath of the antique'; sometimes it could bring death instead. More might be made of the Germanic share in the origins of north Italian equestrian sculpture; it had filtered south of the Alps to the court of the della Scala at Verona. The statement that the early humanists 'looked back across aeons of emblematic portraiture to a remote age when sculptors had been capable of rendering in marble the lineaments of a specific human face' seems to ignore the recurrent attempts since the third century to render the lineaments of a specific human personality.

But much of this criticism is perhaps the prejudice of a Byzantinist.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

SYMBOLISM IN THE BIBLE AND IN THE CHURCH. By Gilbert Cope. (S.C.M. Press; 30s.)

The title of this book, and the dust-jacket with its Henry Moore *Madonna and Child*, and much within its pages is undoubtedly fascinating. There is much too which a discerning reader could glean, for our author covers a vast field and draws copiously from up-to-date writings on psychology and symbolism. Yet we would advise a discerning reader to read critically and turn to sources and think afresh. For how can we speak with restraint of these 287 pages which contain so much which is so utterly alien to traditional and essential Christian thought?

We are told for instance that 'the virginity of Mary is, in a sense, a religious notion which is independent of the parentage of Jesus . . . this amounts to saying that, biologically, Jesus was the child of Joseph and Mary, and that, theologically Christ was the only begotten son of God, conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary' (p. 153).

The reason given for this evacuation of traditional Christian belief is would-be apologetic: 'one can only hope that this kind of approach will be of some help to those who have tripped over the stumbling block of the "virgin birth" in their efforts to follow Christ'. The author of these words does not seem to realize (as the present reviewer has been happily led to realize) that many an intelligent and thoughtful young person of today avidly seeks fullness of truth in the Catholic Church precisely because he is nauseated by the almost constant watering-down of traditional doctrines, in an attempt to be understood of a 'post-Darwinian, post-Freudian, post-Einsteinian age' (p. 12). Certainly we must make attempts to be understood of such an age, and make real contact with our contemporaries: but never at the price of Catholic faith.

Purity of faith matters. We must not flout the elementary definition of faith as a supernatural gift of God; and faith remains supernatural in the believer. It is certainly not something which has welled up from a more or less sex-ridden subconscious. To talk about the Hebrews' wholly 'male' or 'masculine' presentation of God (pp. 93, 114, etc.) has started our author upon a path from which there is no recovery. The wonder of Israel and supreme privilege of the Chosen People was that they gave to the world that faith which is substantially ours, and held dearly to a God who had revealed himself as Lord God, one and unique (Deuter. 6, 4), and anything but patterned upon our human conditions and conceptions. And sex, good thing of God though it be, goes with creaturedom, and was never consciously or unconsciously an attribute of God in the faith and thought of the Hebrews, any more than in that of the New Israel of God.

The Catholic concept of marriage and the glory of virginity are, as we might expect, not understood of our author (cf. p. 163), who has so much to say about sex and so little that is acceptable. Then there is a strange view, twice repeated (pp. 15 and 96), about our Lord's *crossing the river* (Jordan) to be tempted by Satan in the wilderness. Again. we are told that 'any theory of inspiration must be derived from the real nature of the writings' (p. 16). Such a statement all too often clouds converse between Catholic and non-Catholic biblical students. Finally there is a good deal of word-play of the type 'the imagination and

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