

standing of the poem and which there is reason to believe were genuinely in Virgil's mind. His suggestions about the bee-and-laurel and hut-urn-beehive groups of images and the Vulcan-and-Vesta fire symbolism and their interlinking seem to the present reviewer (on the whole and with considerable reservations on points of detail) attractive and convincing. The business of hunting symbolic associations is, however, carried to such extreme lengths and pursued with such exaggerated subtlety that it makes the book extremely difficult to read and at times arouses serious misgivings. It is surely not legitimate to assume that every association which a reading of the *Aeneid* may suggest to a sensitive modern mind, stuffed with the learning of ancient mythographers and commentators and modern writers on comparative religion, must have been present—even subconsciously or unconsciously—in the mind of Virgil. Where Mr Cruttwell, as he very often does, produces solid evidence from Virgil or his contemporaries to show that a particular association or group of associations was likely to be present to Virgil's mind we can follow him, otherwise we must remain unconvinced. There is of course a very real and important sense in which we can say that everything which a great poem suggests to its readers of different types and cultures and successive generations becomes part of its 'meaning', which is thus not static but ever growing in depth, extent and complexity: and it is perfectly right when reading the poem to take this extension of meaning into account and to derive pleasure and profit from it. But we must not go on to assume that it was all in any way in the poet's mind when he wrote. There is much in Mr Cruttwell's book which may well have been in Virgil's mind; but there is also much which is not likely ever to have been in any minds except Mr Cruttwell's and perhaps Mr Jackson Knight's. Nevertheless a reading of the book is likely to be of value for any student of Virgil, for it is obviously a product of devotion, knowledge and sensitiveness to the qualities of Virgil's poetry.

A. H. ARMSTRONG

A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH. By Philip Hughes. Vol. 3: 1270-1517. (Sheed and Ward; 25s.)

The period covered by this work, which extends from the death of St Louis to the publication of the 97 theses of Luther, is one of the most complex and difficult in Church history. Of recent years some of the obscurities and indeed some of the cherished legends of history have been swept away by research scholars. It is, perhaps, the history of institutions and of thought movements that has benefited most, and perhaps some other elements in the late medieval picture require illumination before the whole period can be seen in true perspective. Be that as it may, Father Hughes has exploited what information we have to good effect and has in consequence given us one of the best pictures in English of the late middle ages. It is perhaps inevitable that little should be said of the attitude of the ordinary man towards the problems and movements which agitated the 14th and 15th cen-

turies, and here we think Fr Hughes has not used some of the evidence we do possess. Again, on some other points more could have been said. The position and status of the parochial clergy, the vernacular movement are two points we should have been told more about. Save for a footnote, to take another example, we are left in ignorance of the widespread missionary movements of the early 14th century and their relationship to the commercial imperialism of Venice and Genoa. Even more surprising, the warfare of Teuton and Slav, so important in the religious history of Central Europe from the Adriatic to the Baltic, is only mentioned in relation to the Bohemian crisis.

Fr Hughes has chosen rightly to make the Papacy the focus on which his whole treatment centres and his description of the political action of the Popes is clear and informative; and we suspect that the space required to deal with its complexities has crowded out some of the points we have mentioned. The summaries on recent findings regarding the Avignon Papacy and the whole treatment of Reservations and Provisions is valuable for the ordinary student, as are the sections on the Great Schism and the Conciliar Movement.

What, above all, we must thank Fr Hughes for is the candour with which he treats this curious, fascinating and yet shallow age. He has the great advantage of writing Church history not only with a well-informed mind, but from a clearly defined theological standpoint which provides him with a criterion far more certain and ruthless than that of any secular historian.

It is a period with which candour rooted in faith alone can deal. The failure of the great Papal experiment in European leadership was the sign of the defeat of Universalism. The causes were innumerable; the tension created by the clash between Papal methods of taxation and the claims of the rediscovered civil code added to the background supplied by the system of proprietary churches—*Eigenkirchen*: the running sore of the Papal feudal rights over Sicily eating like a cancer into the economic life of the curia; the ever-growing hostility of the new educated layman and the bitter propaganda of the Spirituals. These and countless other currents were brought to the surface in the subtle and malignant attacks of Philip the Fair, whose campaign of political vilification and blackmail reminds one of more recent events. In Boniface VIII, unattractive man though he was, the great principles of the Canon Law are shattered by the new Europe, and in the deeper humiliations of Clement V the age of the Papacy as the arbiter of Europe comes to an end. Perhaps it fell by its own too narrow stock of virtue. Its great Popes were lawyers, but more is needed than law. Through all the Avignon period the retreat continues in the practical sphere, until when the bad temper, or worse, of Urban VI drives his Cardinals into schism, the State, and above all the French State, is given an opportunity it does not fail to use. Under the aspects of constitutionalism in the Sacred College, of Conciliarism in the Universities, and the secularism of the new

lawyers, the battle with the Papal claims rages until, after Constance, the Papacy emerges, recognised indeed by Europe as supreme in spirituals, but hedged in by concordats and potent threats of rebellion. The most important feature of the age in the light of what was to follow is the triumph of the view lying behind these movements and exploiting them. The re-emergence of the *Rex-Sacerdos* as a force in European development, above all in its aspect as tending towards a *Reichskirche*, supplies the key to the position taken up by the princes at the Reformation, princes whose subjects were well used to princely intervention in Church affairs.

In the intellectual sphere it was an age of Nominalism. The achievement of St Thomas is largely ignored, and the theologian becomes sceptical with regard to reason. Professional theologians tend to divide up into warring schools shut up within a maze of rather unreal distinctions. There are signs that science is about to throw over the Aristotelian Physics and even as far back as the Avignon period a quite new attitude begins to emerge in the Humanistic movement. All this goes to reinforce the secular influences in society, and though Nicholas V made a real attempt to use the impetus of humanistic fervour to promote a revival of Church studies, the theological schools of the 15th century failed to assimilate what was good in the new interests, and refused to understand new techniques of criticism. Cajetan is here a voice crying in the wilderness.

In administration the moral tone of the episcopate slumped, plurality and non-residence increasingly impaired the apostolic action of the Church. Reform legislation was impressive on paper, but though constantly re-enacted was habitually ignored. For the last hundred years of the period Church affairs in Germany were in a state of chaos, Bohemia was worse, while the Gallic Church with her own consent was for all practical purposes ruled by the King. The great legates *a latere*, vice-popes as it were, were as often as not the creatures of the Crown, and only too often the position was the reward of a chief minister.

The rise of the middle class and the expansion of commerce also served to produce new social types whose needs were met by a new type of preaching and the *Devotio Moderna*, practical and simple in its outlook, rejecting speculation and its extravagances, but lacking a sure theological background. It is interesting to note the influence of the *Devotio Moderna* in Charles IV's university at Prague as a breeding ground for many of the theories which sprang from the Czech revival.

For the middle classes of the towns it was the age of the collegiate church and the popular preacher was at the height of his influence. Facts not without relevance for the Reformation movement.

What then of the Papacy in this latter period? The great canonists had failed, the few Popes who had had success were men of God, humble and strong, yet the men who represented the Church on the

throne of Peter failed to read the lesson aright. They plunged ever deeper into politics, so that gradually the interests of the Father of Christendom narrowed until it became that of an Italian prince. The spirit of Machiavelli infected even the persons of the Popes and the Curia became a byword for insincerity and corruption. Most tragic of all, a medieval when he sinned knew that he was a sinner, but for the young Cardinal nephews sin was a word without practical meaning.

If the Church were not the Bride of Christ and the Papacy of divine institution, three such Popes as Alexander VI, Julius II and Leo X, the hog, the butcher and the trifier, would have wrecked the bishopric of Rome, but God, in judging the Church, in pulling her down 'even to her foundations', as Catherine of Siena predicted, did not change those foundations. The evil servants, the corrupt flock fell under the wrath of God, but at the same time Christ restored his Church through the saints. Even before our period ends the revival has begun, above all in Spain, but has not yet come clearly to the surface.

It is a sad and grim story, but one full of instruction. These things are permitted for the 'edification', for the building up of the Church of God, and in spite of every shame inflicted on her by her ministers the Church never forfeits her sanctity or lacks her saints. Thus we learn to distinguish between Christ's rule in the Church, the sanctity of the means through which he rules, from the weakness and sins of profitless servants. We learn how in the redemption of the world cockle is mixed with the wheat, and necessarily so as he came to bring sinners to repentance. Yet woe to those through whom scandal comes. The period stands as a great witness—a great 'Thou shalt not'—a testimony to the divine wrath; but it is equally a testimony (and here Luther's intuition failed him) to the divine presence and preservation of his people.

From this point of view we cannot recommend Fr Hughes's book too highly and the attentive reader will find in each of the sections a commentary—thank God often by contrast—on the Church life of our own days.

IAN HISLOP, O.P.

V A R I A

Admirers of the work of Charles Williams will be glad to have his novels in the new uniform edition issued by Faber & Faber. *War in Heaven* and *All Hallows Eve* have already appeared (7s. 6d. each).

The National Council of Social Service has published *Young Germany Today* (1s.), a report by a delegation of various youth organisations to the British zone of Germany.

George Goldwell Ltd have published *The Mystical Body of Christ* (1s.), a series of charts designed to illustrate the theme of Fr Denis Fahey's *Kingship of Christ and Organized Naturalism*.