

THE CATHOLICS IN CAROLINE ENGLAND, by M. J. Havran; Stanford University Press and Oxford University Press; 30s.

The publisher's note on the jacket of this book informs us that 'many of the manuscript sources and public records employed by the author have hitherto been almost completely ignored by historians'. It is not clear whether this is a charge of incompetence or dishonesty, but in either case it is a serious charge to make without giving a scrap of evidence. Historians will naturally turn first to the author's bibliography to find out the sources that they have ignored. They will not be unduly chastened. It is true that few of them have journeyed to Reading to consult the Trumbull MSS., but they have long known the transcripts of them in the Public Record Office. Otherwise the references are to sources with which all serious historians have been long familiar. Indeed they will be more surprised by the omissions. There is no reference in the book to such relevant sources as the Recusant Rolls, Subsidies or Visitation Books. Most of the information is from printed sources. A glance at Professor Havran's own bibliography is sufficient to refute his claim that 'the Caroline Catholics have been paid little attention' (p. vii).

It is a pity that this note of superiority has crept into the book, for here is a very competent piece of research with a refreshingly novel approach. The political background is adequately presented, and the contrast between the Queen's chapel in London and the secret masses in garrets in remote country houses is well portrayed. But surely it will not be new to many of us. Estimates are attempted of the number and distribution of priests and the size of congregations. There is a chapter on informers and a carefully written account of how the penal laws worked. All this is worthy of praise, but Professor Havran has failed to convince one reader that this book will cause historians to modify their opinions. Like so many works from America this one shows little regard for accuracy in matters not essential to the thesis. Thus we are told that during the first decade of her reign Elizabeth 'endeavoured to induce Catholic conformity through light fines and occasional imprisonments' (p. 2). This is an odd way of summarizing the deposition and life-long restraint of the entire hierarchy and the expulsion of hundreds of professors and incumbents. It is misleading to speak of the 'trials of Edmund Campion and Robert Persons' (p. 76), seeing the latter was never captured. Nor did Clement VIII consecrate George Blackwell archpriest (p. 84). It was not Dr Richard Smith but his predecessor who established the English Chapter (p. 85).

GODFREY ANSTRUTHER, O.P.

EUGENIUS IV: POPE OF CHRISTIAN UNION, by Joseph Gill, S.J.; The Popes through History, Volume I; Burns and Oates; 30s.

It is no doubt fitting that the biography of the pope who fashioned the fragile union between Eastern and Western Christians should appear at a time when

the problem of recreating a stable union is being considered so carefully. Insofar as a moral could be drawn from the story it is the familiar one that ecclesiastical unity is not enough, even in ecclesiastical terms, and also, less familiar, that the neglect of reform within shows a lack of the vitality needed to achieve true unity with an outside body. Indeed Father Gill omits to emphasize the repeated failure of Eugenius to use his power in support of a thorough programme of reform.

As in his earlier books, Father Gill is a brilliant expositor of the labyrinths of European diplomacy and Italian condottieri-warfare, amid which Basel, the Pope and the Greeks pursued one another. The sense of drama is seldom absent from a presentation which is only occasionally blurred. The economic, diplomatic and doctrinal levels are cleverly interwoven.

But it may be that this book provides a more significant land-mark of a different kind: in the biographical treatment of the medieval papacy. Behind the mask of the supposedly formal and depersonalized material relating to medieval popes, who were anyway, it is tacitly assumed, stereotyped individuals, there has been a great reluctance to study the characters of the men, who included one who exclaimed, 'The Lord did not say "I am tradition", but "life"', and another who, accused of nepotism, protested, 'If I had no parents or brothers, I should be Melchisedek'. The chapter devoted to Eugenius's character is full of insight, but perhaps a little cautious and defensive. Despite the defects of quasi-popularization, this sort of writing is not only palatable and thematic, it also penetrates to a psychological layer of historical perception, which medievalists seldom trespass upon except when they want to be funny. Let us hope that the series will exploit this opportunity, avoid the higher flights of hagiography, and not fear to exercise prudent imagination in explaining characters who seldom had the leisure to be dull.

ANTONY BLACK

THE BHAGAVAD GITA. A new translation by Juan Mascaro; (Penguin Classics); 5s.

Of translations of the Bhagavad Gita there is no end, but Mr Juan Mascaro's deserves a high place among them. He is not only a good Sanskrit scholar but he has also an ear for good English and tries to convey something of the poetic quality of the work which is something very rare. His translation of the Upanishads, published under the title *Himalayas of the Soul in the Wisdom of the East* series, is quite unique in this respect, and here he has attempted to do the same thing for the Gita. He has certainly made a very readable translation, which conveys the 'spiritual message' of the Gita, as he says, with remarkable power. But in doing so he has allowed himself very great liberties with the text. It is not simply that he tries to give the meaning of the Gita in good English, but that he offers what is, in fact, a very personal interpretation of the Gita,