

In a letter to Tyrrell, von Hügel pleads for '... deep recollection, purification, quietness, intuition, love . . . ; not all the wit, vehemence, subtlety, criticisms, learning that you can muster (and *how* great they are!) will ever, without those, be other than ruinous to others as well as to yourself'.

Against that sombre background, the figure of the Baron stands out in all its sweetness and attractiveness, radiant with a completely selfless love of God, of our Lord and of his Church, despite a consciousness of the transient blemishes that will to some extent always mar her on this earth. 'Von Hügel was all of a piece, if any man was, and those who imagine that the increasing devotion, indeed sanctity, of his later years, with their ever greater *emphasis* on conformity with the Church and their warnings against the deviating errors of Modernism with its fatal consequences for so many, implied a decisive change of orientation within him, are mistaken.'

THOMAS CORBISHLEY, S.J.

HENRI BRÉMOND. *The Life and Work of a Devout Humanist*. By Henry Horgath. (S.P.C.K.; 13s. 6d.)

The sub-title of this book gives rise to hopes that it is to be a life of Brémond in the Brémond manner. In fact it is no more than an affectionate introduction to the life and works of the famous historian whose originality and charm have obviously won Mr Horgath's heart. But even on this basis the book is not without interest, and the numerous extracts (excellently translated) will stimulate an appetite to go to Brémond's works themselves. But if the reader should do so, I fear that he will in that case discover that Mr Horgath has neglected many things, and those not the least important. He betrays himself when, instead of going on to give a detailed analysis of volumes VII-XI of the '*Histoire Litteraire*', he writes: 'Thus the remaining books of the '*Histoire Litteraire*' form for the most part a devotional treatise of great value to those interested in this subject, but inevitably lacking in the psychological interest which commended volumes I-VI to the lovers of life and letters' (p. 137). I do not know what Brémond would have thought of such an appreciation; but even if he were not satisfied with it, he would readily have pardoned one whose work bears testimony to such a touching enthusiasm for this 'devout humanist'.

H. DE RIEDMATTEN, O.P.

JOHN CASSIAN. *A Study in Primitive Monasticism*. By Owen Chadwick. (Cambridge University Press; 15s.)

This is a well-written study, conscientious and profound without being fastidious. For a long time now Cassian has been calling for a good monograph such as the present volume. Cassian's importance

is unquestionably more far-reaching than the significance of his own personality; as a person he is merely an intermediary. This is not to say that he is deprived of intelligence, but it is to say that there was nothing of the genius about him. Even the very composition of his works betrays the woolliness of his thought; and not the least of the author's merit lies in having followed the details of these writings and, further, in having succeeded in presenting them in a clear form and a readily assimilable order. With regard to the great Benedictine legislation, for all that it owed so much to him, Cassian remains ever the adept of oriental monasticism. He had enough good sense to know that the West could not absorb this type of spirituality straight off, and yet his only *lumen* is the ideal of the Fathers of the Desert. The temperament which he brought to the task, the adaptations which he suggested, were imposed on him by necessity and not by the afflatus of any new spiritual inspiration. St Benedict was perhaps a revolutionary; Cassian never even dreamed of being one. What exactly his achievement and his intentions were are here admirably described with an erudition which makes his book indispensable for understanding the transference of Oriental ideas to the West and the recasting which they had to undergo.

I would make only one reservation about this book. 'Cassian', says the author, 'ceaselessly reiterated that you cannot understand the monastic life unless you are attempting to live it' (p. 47). Cassian is exaggerating, but it remains true that an understanding of monasticism, so it seems to me, demands a theologian's viewpoint. Christian monasticism is too essential to the Christian religion itself for the historian to approach it as though it were merely an historical accident or a secondary phenomenon of Christianity. While it may be thought that the historian's angle of approach allows greater objectivity and offers a better discernment of the origins and antecedents of the monastic movement, such an approach runs the risk of missing what is essential. Mr Chadwick seems to me not entirely to have escaped this danger. However, he has seen well enough throughout the *De Incarnatione* how profoundly it was that Christianity formed the inspiration of a Cassian. Still, no injustice is done him by regretting that he has not applied more profoundly to his book the incontestable gifts as a theologian which he reveals in his chapter on the semi-Pelagian controversy.

H. DE RIEDMATTEN, O.P.

L'ASSEMBLÉE CHRÉTIENNE A L'ÂGE APOSTOLIQUE. By Henri Chirat.
(Lex Orandi, 10. Les Editions du Cerf. n.p.)

As M. Chirat promises in his preface, this book summarises all that the New Testament and the early writings of Christianity can tell us