

women surrounding her Caryllinati, in imitation of the Caterinati of St Catherine of Siena. A book that should be read by all who are interested in the forms holiness takes in the contemporary world.

HILDA GRAEF

THE LIBERAL CATHOLIC MOVEMENT IN ENGLAND: THE RAMBLER AND ITS CONTRIBUTORS 1848-1864; by Josef Altholz; Burns & Oates, 30s.

Although this absorbing and most readable book deals, as its title makes clear, with the Liberal Catholic movement in nineteenth century England, it might almost as well have been written as a modern tract for the times. For after reading it one is left asking, it must be admitted, the same sort of questions as were being posed, implicitly or explicitly, one hundred years ago. Do the clergy really welcome freedom of thought and expression? And how far in fact would they work to bring about an educated laity, or would they still regard this as a painful thorn in the flesh?

If there are now possibilities that did not exist a hundred years ago for Catholic laymen to express themselves publicly and without undue censure on such matters as the deficiencies of Catholic education, or about the merits of controversial contemporary novels raising grave moral issues, or about adopting critical attitudes towards the Curia, or being forthright in history books about the Papacy's lack of wisdom in handling secular rulers, or its dilatoriness in facing up to the social problems of the day, one wonders whether this is not more due to the liberal climate in which all Englishmen now live, than to any thawing in the attitude of the Catholic authorities. Those of us who pray, as surely most Catholics do, for the conversion of England, may be pardoned sometimes for adding the proviso of the youthful St Augustine, that God's will may be done, but not yet.

The story of Simpson and Acton and Newman and their adventure into journalism through the *Rambler* and later, when that had to be discontinued, *The Home and Foreign Review*, is by now well known, though it has, as the publishers truly remark in their puff, 'hitherto been told piecemeal', while portions of it 'have never been told at all'.

Acton is the hero of Dr Altholz's story. His struggle to educate Catholics in England to face the truth, however unpalatable to the pious; to despise those who love darkness and hate the light because the darkness is cosier; to realize that because they are Catholics, they are not *de fide* committed to the support of autocratic forms of secular rule; to be, in the words of a contemporary American admirer, 'more anxious to be living men than to be safe men', is the main theme of this book.

In his struggle to present Acton as a Bunyanesque figure, a Mr Valiant-for-Truth, battling, in Acton's own words 'in the midst of a hostile and illiterate episcopate, an ignorant clergy, a prejudiced and divided laity', against ecclesiastical principalities and powers and against spiritual wickedness in high places,

Dr Altholz takes his hero at his own valuation, and is less than fair to others, Newman in particular. Him he depicts as a rather insipid and lukewarm fighter, too worried about his own problems - his position as an awkward convert, his already difficult relations with the hierarchy, his preoccupation with the Oratory and the Catholic University that never was, to be able to give the kind of whole-hearted support for his journalistic campaign that Acton wanted and that Dr Altholz thinks Acton deserved. In fact, Newman saw in Acton's attitude and activities genuine theological difficulties not apparent to one like Dr Altholz, who writes from the secure position of the uncommitted. It is apparent that Dr Altholz has no real comprehension of, or at any rate sympathy with, the depth of Newman's thought, or of Newman's doubts about the wisdom of challenging authority (however misguided about non-dogmatic matters) in a Catholic society which, because of its immaturity, might well have misinterpreted legitimate criticism of attitudes as a justification for criticising the nature of authority itself. Newman may have been wrong about the degree of English Catholic society's maturity at that time, but he has a case.

Nor does the author ever consider what a waste of talent Acton's life represents. As has been wisely remarked, the polymath Acton, with his massive range of learning, could have achieved far more both for the reputation of Catholic scholarship and for the cause of Liberal Catholicism in England, had he, instead of canalizing his energies into a sterile journalistic struggle that got him nowhere, got down to writing his history of freedom.

Yet this book well repays reading. It is a notable achievement in lucid and incisive writing; the story is admirably well told; and there is an abundance of fascinating quotation from letters, often hitherto unpublished. While for those who like books with a moral, the moral is plainly here for all to draw.

G. D. GREGORY

*THE MIRROR OF CHARITY*, by St Aelred of Rievaulx, translated by Geoffrey Webb and Adrian Walker; Mowbray, 25s.

The awakened interest in every department of the Church's life, theological, biblical, liturgical, patristic, has blown away the dust, disturbed the cobwebs, in many sadly neglected corners. Authors, whose reputations survived on prestige alone and the blessed Latin ignorance of the faithful, are now subjected to the merciless microscope of modern critical methods. Their language pruned, analysed and transformed into terms which the everyday Christian can grasp and assess.

Not all pass this test of merit with flying colours. Some are dated beyond redemption. Even the most adept of translators bogs down in the dross which has sometimes to be cut away so that the thought may stand clear. Modern man looks for meat to sink his teeth into. He just hasn't time to savour the gravy. That is why straightforward word-for-word presentations of writers whose