

Divine Wisdom." The paper on *Law and Political Power* deals with more currently practical and interesting subjects.

Two papers present a comparative study of the conceptions of Church and State in the East and West. In the East "there are not really two societies, Church and State, distinct from one another and each autonomous in its own sphere but only one, the sacred community—Church and State." In the West, the tendency for the Church or State to superimpose its own circle of obedience completely over that of the other has been a constant source of problem.

The volume ends with the paper *The Catholic Concept of the Church* which contains an admonition: "Those who would find the Church of God must seek the living Body of God Made Man."

Miguel Lukban

THOMAS MORE. By Christopher Hollis. The Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee.

"Of Thomas More the world can never tire. His name will live as long as truth and liberty are prized by men. Many volumes have been written concerning him and many more will doubtless still appear. The author of the present book has interpreted anew for us the secret of his greatness and portrayed his character with sympathy and understanding," so says Editor Joseph Husslein, S.J., Ph. D., in the opening sentences of his preface to Christopher Hollis' "Thomas More."

Perhaps, with these words, Husslein gives us also Hollis' reasons for putting forth his own account of More's life and works and for his manner of approach and treatment of them. Hollis was British and he wrote the book as such principally for British consumption with little or no awareness that his book may travel halfway around the globe and find willing readers in the Pacific. For this reason, a non-British reader, who knows as much about the history and country of England as he does about what's going on behind the Iron Curtain, may occasionally be mildly exasperated over the presumptuousness and abruptness with which Hollis introduces the personalities of fifteenth and sixteenth century England and Europe and over the nonchalance with which he alludes to her time-honoured institutions and localities.

As the editor of this biography says, the present work on Thomas More is the author's own interpretation of More's greatness, suggesting thereby, and as the reader will realize before he is halfway through the book, that Hollis wrote for that class of readers who have had, at least, better than secondary-school-knowledge of More's life and his writings.

In the first chapter, biographer Hollis rushes through the first thirty years of More's life, pausing now and then only to explain or justify certain events in More's life which he deemed important, such as More's decision to accept marriage as a vocation. From there, the author uses up three chapters in an "attempt to estimate

the influences which were to mould the character of More," viz., his friends, his love for classical Greece (at that time, the study of classical Greece was under attack by some clergymen and conservatives because the Hellenic culture of old was essentially pagan) and finally his family. To thresh out the "difficult question of More's relations with Erasmus," Hollis lingers through one chapter. Why was More so devotedly attached to Erasmus as to come out publicly in his defence when Erasmus' "Moriae Encomium" was denounced as an impious, atheistic, heretical book and Erasmus himself branded a crypto-Lutheran? Why, even towards the end of his life, did More call Erasmus "my dear darling still," whose works had fallen under the condemnation of the Counter-Reformation popes? Hollis also gives us intimate and edifying glimpses of More's family life by reproducing Erasmus' description of More, by a study of Holbein's painting of the More household, and by quoting a letter of Thomas More to Gunell, then the tutor of the More children. In his estimate of the external influences in More's life, the writer was forced to abandon the chronological sequence of More's life and play havoc with time.

A goodly portion of the book goes to an analysis of More's various works. Twenty-two pages are consumed by the author as he wades through the difficulties presented by More's famous "Utopia," where More apparently smiles down upon the Utopians' somewhat-communistic economic system, their frank hedonism, and their modulated practices of divorce, euthanasia, and religious indifference. Hollis' discussion of More's other works generally runs through the same channel, to take up sides in the controversies which arose over certain features in More's books. Rarely does he touch upon More's worth as a prose writer, though he is of the conviction that "after More English prose was dead for a hundred and fifty years until it was revived by Clarendon and Dryden." And, while More did not manifest originality of ideas in his writings (which is hardly possible when one writes in defence of his Catholic Faith) he did show that he possessed unparalleled originality in humour and presentation.

Most of More's works were written during his public life, and so, in between studies of such works, Hollis recounts the life of Sir Thomas More while in the service of the king of England. Of Thomas More, the diplomat, his biographer does not even give us the satisfaction of passing acquaintance. His narration is impersonally factual, giving us no intimation whatsoever whether or not More was a successful diplomat. He tells us however that More abhorred the work. Of Thomas More, the statesman, the author has done only a little better. His narration of More as Lord Chancellor is always made against the backdrop of historical England and oftentimes Hollis' More recedes into the wings while history's more important personages dominate the scene. Of Thomas More, the judge, the author confesses that "it is hardly within the province of this book nor is it within the competence of the present writer to estimate More's greatness as a judge." He does, however, give us two anecdotes which bear witness to More's humorous shrewdness and wit.

Towards the end of the book and also of More's life, events begin to slow down. The life of Thomas More, the martyr, begins with his resignation from the chancellorship and for a time everything seemed unruffled but already the storm of persecution was gathering fury. It was already common talk that More's obstinacy in refusing to approve Henry VIII's divorce and subsequent marriage to Anne Boleyn was likely to lead him to the scaffold. The king bided his time and More fortified himself against the inevitable. Finally, Parliament passed an act requiring from all subjects an oath which was tantamount to a declaration of approval of the King's divorce and marriage and a repudiation of the Pope. More refused to take the oath and was sent to the Tower. Hollis dwells at length on More's incarceration, and it is here where the reader really begins to "feel" More and identify himself with More. Against the gloom of his cell, the true worth of More shines out with a brilliance which cannot be ignored. Stripped of his possessions, tempted by offers of money and position, and tortured by the thought that even his family seems to have gone over to the other side urging him to take the oath, More, nevertheless, stood his ground. Nothing stood between him and a return to his properties, his family, his former position and glory. Nothing but the thin veil of conscience. Henry realized that he could not break More's soul. He could at least break his neck. And so, More was tried for "high treason." Convicted on the flimsiest of evidence, More was sentenced to death. In the story of the trial, the author gives us fleeting but beautiful glimpses of More speaking as a Christian lawyer, astute, fair and honest; of More speaking as a true Christian, humble and without rancour.

All in all, Hollis wanted to present More as the ideal Catholic layman. More was, so to speak, a man of the world and not some monk perpetually praying in some cloistered monastery. Yet, he was ever holy. More was a "merry saint" not some sadfaced Pharisee. More was an honest man who rose to the highest position in England through honest means. More was loyal to his God and to his King unto death.

Bienvenido Gorospe

All books reviewed in this issue belong to the library of Mr. VICENTE G. BENGZON JR. of the Electoral Tribunal of the Senate.

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