

intolerably tedious and silly if one feels bound to assume that Plato is intending them to be taken absolutely seriously, and is never passing over to not unamused criticism of incautious or superficial practitioners of the method (which there is reason to suspect enthusiastic pupils in the Academy sometimes decidedly overdid) and the curious results they obtained. On this point Professor Skemp is extremely sensible, and some of his remarks deserve quotation. 'I think that the view of Reality which is implied in the use of the method is vital and serious for Plato; but this does not exclude criticism of the method on his part, and though Plato no doubt ought to be as solemn as some of his commentators, cheerfulness will keep breaking in.' (p. 68 n. 1.) Religion (and poetry) also will keep breaking in in Plato: and the myth of the *Statesman*, with its extraordinary picture of the reversal of the motion of the universe and the two alternating ages or periods, leads Professor Skemp to a long and excellent discussion of Plato's theology (a subject on which he has already written an excellent short book in the *Cambridge Classical Studies*).

A dialogue of this scale, importance and variety requires an ample and competent commentary, and the Professor of Greek in the University of Durham has provided generously for both specialist and non-specialist readers. His very readable translation is preceded by 117 pages of introductory matter, including essays on all the principal problems raised by the dialogue. There are very full notes, which will be indispensable to future specialist students of Plato, and an important Appendix on the dating of the *Timaeus*. There are of course inevitably particular points of interpretation on which one might disagree, or at least wish for further discussion, but in a short review it seems more important to state how very sensible, solidly based, and enlightening is Professor Skemp's interpretation both of this particular dialogue and of Plato's thought when he deals with it more broadly in the introductory essays. A feature of the book which readers of *BLACKFRIARS* will welcome is the number of illuminating parallels and contrasts between Plato and the Bible or Christian thought, especially of the English evangelical tradition, some of which should provide an excellent stimulus to serious thinking; the critics of that evangelical tradition, incidentally, are not entirely excluded, for Mr Weller, senior, makes what is probably his first appearance in a Platonic commentary in the note on Shepherds on page 59.

A. H. ARMSTRONG

HUGH OF SAINT VICTOR ON THE SACRAMENTS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH (*De Sacramentis*). English version by Roy J. Defarrari. (The Medieval Academy of America, Cambridge, Massachusetts; 1951.)

The medieval method of translation was *de verbo ad verbum*. The translator did not aim at a readable or even intelligible version. The

text, when it left his hands, would go through a second stage, when a commentator would interpret and explain it. Transatlantic translators of medieval texts seem to prefer the medieval method, so that their English will hardly make sense unless compared with the original. No attempt is made to go on to the necessary second stage. Professor Defarrari, on the contrary, has the good sense and courage to take responsibility for both stages at once: 'The translator has endeavoured to make his translation its own commentary, a characteristic which, he believes, every worthy translation should possess'. The style of the *De Sacramentis*, as he says, is 'forceful, logical and clear'. He wishes to keep these qualities in the English. He has succeeded well in making his version both clear and logical. The 'force' in medieval Latin can only be conveyed at the price of considerable freedom and loss of exactness, which Professor Defarrari, quite rightly, has not cared to pay. Much work lies behind his translation. The Latin text in the *Patrologia Latina* proved to be too rotten a basis. He has therefore used a new edition which is being prepared by Brother Charles Henry Buttmer (editor of a critical text of Hugh's *Didascalicon*). It is to be hoped that this new Latin edition will appear soon. Meanwhile, even those who read Latin will find it worth their while to look at the translation for those passages where the text in the *Patrologia latina* seems unsatisfactory.

It is a pity that so excellent a book should have a defective apparatus. A reference to the new edition, 1948, of De Ghellinck, *Le mouvement théologique du XIIIe siècle*, instead of to the old one of 1914, could have replaced a number of articles in nineteenth-century reference books in the select bibliography. The account of Hugh's life in the introduction needs correction. A recent paper shows that he came from Lorraine or the Low Countries rather than Saxony (F. E. Croydon, 'Notes on the Life of Hugh of St Victor', *Journal of Theological Studies*, xl, 1939, 232-53). By a slip the author has put his *death* as well as his birth in Saxony, although a few lines below we are told that he remained at St Victor 'to the end of his life'. The few footnotes, as the author explains, 'consist chiefly of references to the Holy Scriptures and occasionally of a warning that Hugh is departing from theological orthodoxy as well established in our own day'. In that case one would expect a note on Hugh's view in the *De homine assumpto* controversy, a burning question in the twelfth century. Hugh's identification of 'person' with soul in man was not accepted by all his contemporaries, much less by later scholastics. The student will find himself bogged in the heading and opening sentence of the prologue to book i (apart from the misprint: 'Scripture' should be in the plural):

'Why he has changed the reading. Since, therefore, I previously composed a compendium on the initial instruction in Holy Scripture,

which consists in their historical reading, I have prepared the present work for those who are to be introduced to the second stage of instruction which is in allegory.'

Hugh meant that the Scriptures should be read first in their historical or literal sense. He intended his *De Sacramentis* to prepare students for the allegorical interpretation. A brilliant commentary on the title and words of this prologue by Frs Paré, Brunet and Tremblay, *La Renaissance du XIIIe siècle* (Paris, Ottawa, 1933), 258-66, explains their meaning and their significance in the history of teaching methods. The student really needs help in understanding Hugh's method before he can grasp the doctrine; form and subject matter are intimately connected.

These are slight flaws, however, and the student should be thankful to have a fundamental text made available in English. Much has been written about the Victorines, but only the original texts can give an exact impression of their mentality. The *De Sacramentis* takes us right into the school of St Victor in the early twelfth century. It shows us the scholastic method in its origins, combined with the interest in religious psychology, the Christian-historical outlook, the stress on sacraments in the Church, in the Scriptures and in nature that characterised Hugh's teaching. Hugh planned his book as a whole. Its scheme is the history of man's creation and of his religious development. He has fitted his theological teaching into this framework. For this reason it must be read as a whole and it only makes sense as a whole. Professor Defarrari deserves warm congratulation on translating so long a work *in toto*, instead of boiling it down into extracts.

BERYL SMALLEY

DANTE AS A POLITICAL THINKER. By A. P. d'Entrèves. (Oxford: Clarendon Press; 10s. 6d.)

If all professors were compelled to pass a stiff test in the art of lecturing, Professor d'Entrèves would have nothing to fear. He knows just how to hit the mean between treatise and conversation, the aim of that difficult art. His warm and polished manner is a sustained compliment to his hearers. In the grim Anatomical School, where the lectures that make up this volume were given, his charm was particularly acceptable. But when that persuasive voice had returned to Oxford the urge to revise one's impressions asserted itself, so that the surprisingly prompt publication of these lectures, with a postscript and learned notes, is very welcome indeed. As always, the author displays his mastery of a medium which, one supposes, was, once at any rate, foreign to him; only a certain formality in the style—itsself a virtue, if perhaps un-English—betrays the fact.