

sculpture, while at the same time trying to hold on to the accepted form of an altar piece. Given the austerity of the group as a whole, the crucifix might have been expected to act as a climax of visual and plastic interest. But this it somehow failed to do. Perhaps Mr Hoskin's courage deserted him in the end. For, while presenting us with what looks like a very challenging piece of contemporary work, he has led us to expect from the arresting texture of his image a more complete assimilation of the traditional form than he has actually achieved. But this is possibly asking too much. The whole group is undoubtedly one of the most imaginative efforts to be seen in the exhibition and if it falls short of complete success, it demonstrates what can be done in the way of rethinking a tradition.

It is rare enough these days to find a painter brave enough to tackle the interpretation of the Christian message. It was all the more interesting to see how R. J. Hitchcock approached the problem. Using a technique reminiscent of the later work of Jackson Pollock, though possibly richer in colour and more highly finished, Hitchcock's Crucifixion was visually very rewarding. The variety of textures enhanced by the burnished surface helped the play of red and gold to suggest rather than define the presence of the figure. The same painter's *Gaderene Man* was less successful. Again one had to fall back on the catalogue. Once the image has been allowed to retreat too far into the paint it cannot be rescued by a title, no matter how suggestive it be.

ALBERIC FORBES, O.P.

Letters to the Editor

SIR,

The Regius Professor, we are told, is watching Catholic historians, and Mr McGrath, it seems, is watching the Regius Professor. Yet, lest it should be supposed that Father Philip Hughes has contrived – or would ‘conspired’ be a better word? – to write three volumes on the Reformation in England without ‘explicitly’ mentioning the Marian martyrs, the following references may be to the point: *The Reformation in England*, Vol. II, pp. 254–304, together with Appendix I, pp. 331–46, and Appendix III, pp. 349–53. It is improbable that any Catholic could read these pages without embarrassment and even contrition.

As an exercise, it is interesting to compare the treatment of the Marian persecution in Father Philip Hughes' *A Popular History of the Reformation* with that in Sir Maurice Powicke's *The Reformation in England*. Father Philip Hughes is considerably more ‘explicit’.

I am Sir,

Your obedient servant,

T. CHARLES EDWARDS

DEAR SIR,

I notice that my pamphlet on the Forty Martyrs is attacked in your April number by Mr Patrick McGrath as an example of the way a Catholic should NOT write history. May I say that the history in this pamphlet is incidental; its main purpose is devotional. Secondly, that in so far as history must be given its due, I have inserted several plain statements of Catholic deficiencies. Mr McGrath attacks some very conscientious historians, among them Fr Hughes and Fr Devlin, so a mere pamphleteer should not complain. I suspect that Mr McGrath's attitude is getting a little out of date; surely Catholics have now adjusted themselves to the glaring faults of the later Middle Ages, and are returning to an emphasis on the positive merits of Catholicism, always denigrated by the Reformers. What does Mr McGrath have to say of Lord Acton who states in his lecture on the Reformation (in *Modern History*) that 'a large number' of monks were executed under Cromwell?

Yours faithfully,

JOHN BATE

PATRICK MCGRATH writes:—

I am glad that Mr Edwards has also joined the Watch Committee, but I think he ought to watch more carefully. No one has in fact suggested that Fr Philip Hughes failed to mention explicitly the Marian martyrs, and Mr Edwards' references are therefore irrelevant. Professor Trevor-Roper's statement, which I did not incidentally endorse, was that '. . . such details as the burning of Cranmer, Latimer and Ridley are never explicitly mentioned . . .'. My own query was whether the Protestant martyrs really had justice done to them. Fr Hughes (vol. II, p. 275) refers to them as 'Oddities . . . unusual types, self-opinionated, argumentative, dogmatic, intolerant . . . so very, very sure of whatever they have themselves found out, and so contemptuous of whatever else the learning and experience of others has discovered . . .'. What I had in mind was that these people, however fanatical and unpleasant some of them may have been, were prepared to die for their beliefs. Even if one disagrees with their beliefs, one must, I think, admire their courage and their sincerity.

To Mr Bate, may I suggest that even the most conscientious historian, and even the writer of a work which is primarily devotional, is not above criticism and may indeed even welcome it? Mr Bate says that he has inserted several plain statements of Catholic deficiencies. This is true, but it has nothing to do with the argument, and I hope he is not suggesting that I am to be classified with those Reformers who denigrated the positive merits of Catholicism. Concerning the monks, I denied Mr Bate's statement that they refused to agree to Henry VIII's religious changes. This is a matter of fact, not of opinion, but if it is necessary to quote authorities, I refer Mr Bate to David Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, III, p. 181 '. . . by the end of 1535 all the monks, with the rarest individual exceptions . . . had repeatedly and solemnly rejected the Pope and explicitly accepted royal supremacy.'