

The last chapters are devoted to Rome and the East, and there is a long study of the belief and conduct of Justinian with regard to the position and importance of the Papacy. Mgr. Batiffol cannot find a clear solution to the problem of Justinian: 'Justinian thought that he was invested by God with a sovereign power that gave him rights over the Church, and he never explained what limits he saw to these rights, whether as regards Œcumenical Councils or as regards the Apostolic See. As regards this latter, Justinian felt the need of having it on his side, he could not do without it: he did everything to win its collaboration, even by violence and corruption' (p. 317).

Speaking of the Malines Conversations, Mgr. Batiffol says that his 'Anglican friends' were willing to admit that 'neither a primacy of honour nor a primacy of imperialism, but a primacy of responsibility had been the special vocation of the Roman Church.' He goes on to say that it will be a blessed day when Anglicans and Orthodox recognise that this vocation has been a providential blessing for Catholicism and that separated autonomies should be united with the *Cathedra Petri*. 'I do not say that such a reunion should take place unconditionally; the precedent of the Council of Florence shows clearly that any reunion implies certain assurances and engagements on both sides; it is possible that the Uniate model is not the *ne varietur* to be followed by future reunions. The future will tell us. I only wish to say that to reunite is not to absorb, and that Catholicism could never be synonymous with the West. We Catholics of the West are advancing by degrees, through the study of history and the deepening of our theology of the Church, to an understanding of the necessary and sufficient conditions of such a reunion' (p. 214).

It is to be hoped that these essays will contribute their part to the same great cause.

S. H. SCOTT.

HELOISE ET ABELARD. Par Etienne Gilson. (Vrin, Paris; 30 frs.)

With his capacity to grasp its entire historical setting M. Gilson is qualified to give something like an authentic interpretation of this tremendously significant yet so ambiguous love affair. Inevitably his material is simply the Confessions of the actors themselves, represented by the *Historia Calamitatum* and the Letters—the authenticity of which he first very convincingly establishes.

It is the analysis of their attitude towards their marriage that first reveals the cast of mind and the moral character of the

lovers. It is made quite clear that no Canonical impediment stood in the way of their marriage, but that the obstacle arose entirely from the ideal they shared together of the vocation of a philosopher. They held that a life of celibacy was necessary for his complete dedication to his task, and essential to the dignity of his status. To be bound to a wife and family was a condition sufficiently ignominious in itself; for a philosopher it meant degradation, loss of caste. This they regarded as a sort of Christian-Stoic ideal, to be gathered from St. Jerome's teaching in which they found Seneca assimilated, or further back from St. Paul as incorporating all that was best in the tradition of classic moral philosophy. But in fact, as they held it, the ideal was thoroughly pagan, self-centred, full of pride, a subtle perversion of the genuine Christian ideal of chastity.

But it was in a very different spirit of pride that they invoked this common ideal. Moved, as it would appear, by predominantly low motives, of jealousy, desire, fear, etc., Abelard insisted that the marriage should take place; requiring, however, that it should be kept strictly secret, in order to secure for himself, although at Heloïse's expense, the external glory of the part. Whereas Heloïse, thinking only of Abelard—in terms of this ideal, tried to the last to dissuade him from the marriage, urging instead that they should maintain their existing immoral relationship. A more subtle, far more dangerous pride than Abelard's is here in play, basing itself on a theoretical conception of their love relationship as being a supreme, absolute end in itself. This is not, then, a movement of blind romantic self-assertion: it is an attitude carefully constructed on the basis of certain doctrines learned from Abelard himself (a double seducer!)—namely, his version of the Ciceronian theory of Pure Friendship, and his ultra-Augustinian theory of the all-importance of Intention, the moral irrelevancy of the outward deed. It would be difficult to exaggerate the interest and the significance of the spiritual dynamics here represented.

It was precisely the conversion of Abelard that stirred up the devilish factor lurking in this state of mind. Heloïse had hitherto sacrificed herself completely to his will; for his sake she had even waived her rights as his wife and consented to take vows of religion. She knew how to find happiness in such sacrifice, it was a way of worshipping Abelard. But now that he had turned whole-heartedly to God and required that they should love each other only in Him, it seemed to her precisely that she was being robbed of her religion. It was a thrilling

and terrible duel that they now fought on this issue. Abelard is here at his finest and greatest. As far as can be known from the evidence of the letters, Heloïse allowed herself to be silenced but would retract nothing of her bitter complaint. 'Deo specialiter, sua singulariter,' is her only ironic concession. (For which M. Gilson adopts the rendering: 'A Dieu par l'espèce, a lui comme individu.') Abelard had mastered the worst that was in him; it might appear that Heloïse had fallen a victim to the best that was in her. This is not the author's final conclusion. His criticism goes deeper than that.

Finally, M. Gilson adduces certain features of this history as evidence with which to refute the conventional historian's estimate of the relative cultural achievement of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance; and two essays of an older date are added as appendices in which his counter-thesis is more widely developed. It is matter of very considerable importance. The conclusions seem irresistible, the expositional method is brilliantly informative. There is a very revealing cross-questioning of Luther and Erasmus. Of an Erasmus it is admitted that he was possessed of a certain valuable historical sense in which the mediævals were largely lacking. An Aquinas was perhaps too preoccupied in assimilating the thought of Aristotle to be interested in the man for his own sake or in his writings as personal or literary records. But what Erasmus gained was far more than offset by his losing what Aquinas had possessed—for that was to lose a hold on the first principles of any sound humanism. Thus for Erasmus the classics were valuable chiefly for their style and their story; Plato and Aristotle were for him only great characters or figures. Accordingly it was as rationalists, 'naturalists,' who had dared to incorporate pagan thought into their Christian synthesis that—in alliance here with Luther—he marked out the mediæval scholastics for condemnation. He held that a Christian mind must be fed exclusively on the Gospel, the Pure (*i.e.* the historical) Gospel. The most fatally easy way to misjudge this whole present question is to take the quarrel between Erasmus and the philistine scholastics of his own day as being representative of the line of cleavage between the mediæval and the Renaissance cultures.

RICHARD KEHOE, O.P.

THE JACOBAN AGE. By David Mathew. (Longmans; 15s.)

The author has demonstrated in this as in all his previous works a wonderful gift for picturing character, and supplying the correct atmosphere of the period under survey. I use the