

In his preface Mr Beckett explains that his purpose is not to write another history of protestant dissent in Ireland. Rather he sets himself the task of showing how the same problem of Irish dissent impinges with varying reactions on two protestant governments and parliaments, and on the Irish established church. He achieves his purpose in a critical spirit which gives the book its value in Irish history.

The plan of exposition is very satisfactory. If reading the chronological survey which forms Part I (pp. 20-105) and follows the statement of the author's case in the Introduction, is sometimes a little like the process of shaking a loosely tangled ball of string to persuade the ends to show themselves, the difficulty is peculiar to the confused and frequently overlapping aspects of the problem, and is amply compensated by the concluding chapters of Part II: Special Topics on the *Minor Sects* and the *Economic Status of the Dissenters* which show again how firm a grasp Mr Beckett has on a period and subject to which he has devoted much time and scholarship.

C. J. ACHESON.

AENEAS PONTIFEX. By H. J. Rose. (Phoenix Press; 1s. 6d.)

In this, the second of a series of 'Virgilian Essays' of which the general editor is Mr F. Jackson Knight, Joint Hon. Secretary of the Virgil Society, Professor Rose discusses the question raised by the statement in Macrobius that Virgil '*Aeneas pontificem ostendit*'. That statement is supported by some very fanciful reasoning, but since Aeneas is generally agreed to be largely the poetical representation of Augustus, and Augustus is known to have been greatly interested in the religion of his country, Professor Rose has set himself to enquire if, and to what extent, Aeneas is made to behave like a pontiff, that is the head of a State religion on something like Roman lines.

The enquiry begins with a full and well-documented consideration of the pontiff's duties which results in the conclusion that 'the pontiffs had much of the character of an ecclesiastical court presided over by a bishop; they were the repositories of the ancient traditions; their business, apart from their own bridge-building ceremonial, was to see that the State cult was carried out in the proper manner, without any irregularities.

From this standpoint, Professor Rose critically examines all the relevant passages in the Aeneid. He shows Aeneas to be 'throughout rather the recipient than the giver of recondite sacral knowledge' and 'well enough versed in ritual to be correct in all he does relating to the gods, but when his own *pietas* is insufficient, consulting others better informed than himself'.

But he points to the link between Aeneas and the historical pontiffs in the prominence of the Trojan Penates in his ritual, since the Trojan Penates were the *Penates publici* of the Roman cult and high

importance was attached to Vesta in historical times. He finds a stronger link where Aeneas, bidden by the Sibyl to vow and pray, shows his intention of supervising the cult of his city when founded, and promises the temples to Apollo, which in Virgil's time included the splendid erection on the Palatine, and a shrine for the Sibyl where will be kept her oracles and the secrets of fate revealed to his people. Incidentally Professor Rose notes how thoroughly Aeneas on occasion can be Augustus, for Virgil could not have imagined there would be temples before Rome was built and that was some centuries after Aeneas's time, and he knew that the Sibylline books were in the keeping of Jupiter Capitolinus until his own day.

Thus the modern scholar has found the real justification for the statement of antiquity, and Professor Rose when in conclusion he quotes the final words of the speaker in Macrobius, 'Do you not think I have made it out that without a knowledge of law civil and ecclesiastical the depths of Virgil cannot be sounded?' very justly claims that his essay clearly indicates the force of that question.

R. R. BRIDGES.

ITALIAN PROSE USAGE: A supplement to Italian Grammars. By Walter Shewring. (Cambridge University Press; 6s.)

Being 'addressed to those who are learning to write Italian', this little book can only be tested in practice. A first reading, however, gives confidence, as well as pleasure; for those who have enjoyed Mr Shewring's less technical writings will not find this one lacking in the precise and economical elegance they have learned to expect from him.

If Italian prose is but one strand in the web of our culture no one can write really well about it, even as briefly as this, who does not know about a good many other things as well. That is Mr Shewring's less obvious advantage; the other is his understanding of the strength and colour of this particular strand. His observations have a first-hand freshness; and they are beautifully arranged. The 'Notes' at the end supplement, and in many points correct, Hoare's standard Italian Dictionary.

K.F.

THE CHURCHES PICTURED BY PUNCH. By A. L. Drummond. (The Epworth Press; 5s.)

The clergy have, since 'Punch' was first published, been one of its staple subjects of jest, latterly always good-humoured, but in the beginning by no means always so. Naturally the chief emphasis has been on the clergy of the Establishment, and this pleasant little book gives us a very fair history of the Church of England from the time of the Oxford Movement until the 1914 war. It is noticeable how the Catholic clergy nowadays *never* appear in the pages of 'Punch'.

P.F.