of God. Catholic wisdom, reaching as it must from the transcendent mysteries of Faith to the stones in the field, is not a historical survival: it serves and safeguards Truth as confidently in an atomic age as ever it did under the stress of the Arians or the Albigenses, and any book that seeks to make known its constant work, and hence the constant hope it brings, is one that our generation, in all its misery of mind and will, should be grateful for.

Mr Gollancz, more conscious than most men of the inhumanities of our time, proposes no fixed philosophy for their resolution. 'The book is full of contradictions', he explains, and its principal delight is the width of its choice: for width rather than depth is the criterion here. There is much fascinating material from Hebrew sources; Hasidic legends and Talmudic extracts that reflect an ancient piety and a shrewd vision of man. Christian mystics are quoted—St John of the Cross and Walter Hylton, Eckhardt and Suso—but it is significant that Angelus Silesius outnumbers them all. And modern authors range from Berdyaev to Aldous Huxley, from Jung to Gabriel Marcel. There are even musical quotations, and a movement from Beethoven's Quartet in E flat (op.127) provides a magnificently apt introduction to the section on 'The Many and the One'. It is in this section indeed that Mr Gollancz's purpose is best revealed: eclectic, compassionate, aware of man's weakness and his glory, Mr Gollancz has, as he admits, ceased to despair. He might not call Hope a theological virtue, but he has brought together much unexpected evidence that confirms a Christian in his conviction that such is its name.

Mr Sheed is concerned with a smaller territory, and yet it is one which has inspired the deepest expression of Catholic devotion, not to speak of poetry and art. His book in praise of our Lady is confined to extracts from authors he has himself published. That might seem a sad restriction, but his choice includes Father Martindale's account of our Lady in the Old Testament, Father Vincent McNabb's analysis of the Gospel narratives of the Annunciation and the Visitation, Maisie Ward's description of the genesis of the Rosary and Arnold Lunn's explanation of how easily rosaries are lost. *The Mary Book* appears most opportunely to celebrate the definition of our Lady's Assumption, and it is at the same time a just tribute to a publisher's achievement. There are twelve reproductions of paintings of our Lady, and, as is usually the case, the plates in photogravure are far happier than those in colour. ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

THE ENGLISH REFORMATION TO 1558. By T. M. Parker. (Oxford: Home University Library; 5s.)

Mr Parker's book is to be greatly welcomed; it is eirenic in the best sense, its appearance at the moment is opportune since it will be widely

read, and by those whose previous knowledge of Reformation history is limited, and it forms a first-rate foundation for further study. It is necessarily a highly compressed outline, but the author has done his work with a skill and grace that make this scarcely noticeable.

One of the greatest merits is that it never simplifies, or over-emphasises one aspect of a problem at the expense of another. The result is a most balanced presentation, and while judgments are by no means absent which give some indication of the writer's presuppositions (he is a Librarian of Pusey House) these are seldom, if ever, such as could not have been made by a Catholic.

Amongst the best things in the book are the chapters on religion in the early sixteenth century and on the relations of Church and State in medieval England. The author's verdict on the state of popular religion in 1535 is that this country, apart from under-currents of Lollardy and a certain amount of Lutheran infiltration into London and its environs, was thoroughly Catholic in sentiment and practice, but that anti-clerical feeling was strong and that pietistic rather than instructed doctrinal Catholicism was predominant. When disruption began, as it did, by a revolt against religious authority without any very great change at first in religious belief and practice, popular religion was in no position to stand out against the powerful Tudor despotism; the more so that anti-clericalism disposed men to ally themselves with the action of the Crown against the clergy. Moreover, though Church and State were in theory parallel and co-ordinated powers, so closely were they intertwined in practical affairs that men's eyes were often unable to distinguish them; and this was especially so since Wolsey had become both Chancellor of the Kingdom and Papal legate *a latere*. The latter office enabled almost all matters which ordinarily fell under the jurisdiction of the Court of Rome to be dealt with at home by one whose authority, so long as he enjoyed the royal favour, was quasi-supreme in both spheres. It is not fanciful to conclude, as Mr Parker points out, that this unique position suggested to the King, or to someone else with eyes to see—Cromwell for instance, the possibility of welding together Church and State in England to form an engine of immense power from which no individual in the realm could escape.

In dealing with the vexed question of the dissolution of the religious orders, while in no way minimising the lowness of the motives which actuated those responsible for it, the important point is made that the opinion that drastic reform and even total suppression were necessary was by no means incompatible with unimpeachable Catholic orthodoxy. The best evidence of this is the *Consilium de emendanda ecclesia* drawn up in 1538 by a committee, of which Cardinal Pole was a

member, to advise the Pope on measures of reform. This recommended the gradual abolition of all existing monasteries on the grounds that to reform them back to their original zeal was considered impossible.

The most Catholic way possible of looking at the Reformation would be to see it as St Thomas More saw it. He was under no illusions as to the static condition into which contemporary theology had fallen, yet, unlike some of his friends, he reverenced St Thomas Aquinas. He himself saw clearly the true implications of the rejection of Papal authority, yet he was fully alive to the force of the genuine doubts about it which made others hesitate or temporise. He could hardly have been blind to the partial decay of the religious orders, yet he seems to have considered trying his own vocation with the Carthusians and at one time thought of becoming a Franciscan. The final merit of this small book is the admirable insight it gives us into the mind and outlook of this great saint and martyr.

HENRY ST JOHN, O.P.

THE LIMITS AND DIVISIONS OF EUROPEAN HISTORY. By Oscar Halecki. (Sheed and Ward; 10s. 6d.)

A short review can hardly do more than add one witness to the importance of this little book. It has a Preface by Mr Christopher Dawson, whose high praise of it is the best guarantee of its interest. It has rather the air and manner of a provisional sketch, but its author is so evidently well-informed, wide-minded and serious, that it is sure to be regarded, for some time to come, as a standard survey of its subject. It will be read wherever men are trying to understand the modern age historically. For it is very much concerned with the modern age. If one may divide history-books into those which appear to be written simply to account for the past, and those which are written with an eye on the present and the future, this is one of the latter. And Professor Halecki's eye is both alert and long-sighted.

Any summary must be tentative; the book is curiously provocative of second readings. It is so, partly because its provisional, or, better perhaps, its meditative, air stimulates further thought; and partly because the author has conveyed, possibly more than he realised, his own sense of the urgency of his theme. From a quick—alas too quick—reading one can however retain three major emphases. First, there is the stress on the importance and the European character of Eastern states now engulfed by the Soviet. Secondly, there is a clear, if prevalently rather political, view of the historically *original* character of this mid-twentieth century—the view, spreading everywhere now, that, in a historically valid sense of the phrase, a *new age* is beginning. Thirdly, there is an attempt, focussing on the concept of freedom