

and it seems impossible to deny its political significance even though it is possible to hold that Mr Trevor Davies has over estimated it. Perhaps the most valuable element in his research has been the careful analysis of the evidence for the regional distribution of witch beliefs. A study of the evidence at the trials would provide a further distinction between the witch-lore of 16th century continental origin and the magic-motifs in indigenous folk lore which is so often interwoven in it—notably in the evidence of the choice of familiars. A study of the survival of late medieval charms might help to explain the fact that in England and Scandinavia the practice of witch craft was so often held to be associated with an adherence to the Old Religion. Both lines of research might lead to the conclusion that there was a fundamental contrast between the witch craft that seems to have survived so long in Wales and the western counties and the witch beliefs held so strongly in East Anglia. Again it might be useful to analyse the term 'Royalist' more closely and to distinguish between the court party with its note of conscious sophisticated modernity and the country Royalists whose beliefs must have been identical with those of their fellow squires of the other faction. But it is a tribute to the quality of Mr Trevor Davies's research that it suggests so many lines to be developed from it.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN ANTIQUITY: No. 8, *Baptism in the Demonstrations of Aphraates, the Persian Sage*. By Edward J. Duncan. (\$2.50); No. 9, *The Concept of Martyrdom according to St Cyprian of Carthage*. By Edelhard L. Hummel, C.M.M. (\$2.00; both Catholic University of America.)

Concomitantly with a series of translations of the works of the Fathers (Ancient Christian Writers: ed. Plumpe and Suasten), the Catholic University of America is bringing out a series of Studies in Christian Antiquity, detailed studies of one particular doctrine in one Patristic writer.

No. 8 of the series is devoted to the doctrine of baptism in the *Demonstrations* of Aphraates. Aphraates is 'the earliest witness of any significance for the theology and liturgy of that portion of the Oriental Church known as East Syrian', and 'the peculiar interest of the *Demonstrations* lies in the fact that they are representative of the mind and practice of a Church virtually uninfluenced by Greek and Roman culture, even in the fourth century. . . .'

Fr E. J. Duncan has dealt with his subject very thoroughly, and the book is remarkable for its clarity, and its copious documentation. An introduction deals with the beginnings of Christianity in Persia, and puts Aphraates in his setting, while successive chapters deal with the names for baptism, two Old Testament types, the revelation, institution and promulgation of baptism, the recipients, administration and effects.

Indices and bibliographies are comprehensive. The quotations from

Aphraates are given mostly in the Latin translation of Parisot. The reason for this is not apparent, and is apt to become irritating, when for instance (p. 130) the technical meaning of *sacerdotes* is discussed with reference to a similar use of the word by Ephraem, also quoted in Latin translation. The obvious method is to quote English, and to discuss technical vocabulary with reference to the original Syriac. Some other references to secondary sources seem to be unnecessarily polyglot. It is however a virtue of the book that one should be impressed rather by the cautious scholarship than by any over-bold theory of the writer.

Few writers could be studied with more profit on the subject of martyrdom than St Cyprian of Carthage. Fr E. L. Hummel has dealt very competently with his subject, and is particularly successful in his translations of the many inspiring texts of St Cyprian. The book achieves a high standard of scholarship, copiously annotated, with comprehensive bibliography and indices, and is in every way worthy of the noble subject of which it treats.

VALENTINE WOOD, O.P.

DARTFORD PRIORY: *The History of the English Dominicanesses*. (Blackfriars Publications; 2s.)

The regular round of contemplative prayer, as natural and fruitful as the round of the seasons, is not an apt study for history. It is only when its holy rhythm and peace are rudely shattered by persecution that events occur which give any scope to the historian.

This is borne out by the present narrative of the Dominican nuns of the Second Order. Their lives in the heyday of Catholic England were singularly uneventful, as the world judges, and there is little that can now be written of their two hundred years of tranquil and unostentatious observance and praise. They never became numerous enough to have more than one convent. This was at Dartford and was begun in 1356. Though so little of this book is about Dartford it is only fitting that the original foundation should be chosen as the title.

The tribulations of the community began when their convent was suppressed by Henry VIII in 1539, and the nuns were dispersed with small pensions. The English Dominicans were unfortunate in having no legitimate Provincial at the time. John Hilsey had been imposed by Cromwell and never confirmed by the Master General. He was a mere henchman of the king's and must be held responsible for the surrender of Dartford. The Prioress, Sister Jane Fane, leased part of the convent to her brother as stables. This may have been a pathetic attempt to preserve the property for happier days, and there is not enough evidence to condemn her as a willing accessory of Hilsey's. Her brother at all events seems to have kept the faith and was executed in the next reign.

The Dartford nuns and the nuns of Syon were the only communities of women to be re-established under Queen Mary. They were