

12-1-1998

"Cardinal Herbert Vaughan: Archbishop of Westminster, Bishop of Salford, founder of the Mill Hill Missionaries" by Robert O'Neil

Jeffrey P. von Arx S.J.

Fairfield University, president@fairfield.edu

Copyright 1998 Theological Studies (<http://www.ts.mu.edu/>)

Peer Reviewed

Repository Citation

von Arx, Jeffrey P. S.J., "Cardinal Herbert Vaughan: Archbishop of Westminster, Bishop of Salford, founder of the Mill Hill Missionaries" by Robert O'Neil (1998). *History Faculty Publications*. Paper 20.
<http://digitalcommons.fairfield.edu/history-facultypubs/20>

Published Citation

von Arx S.J., Jeffrey P., Book Review: "Cardinal Herbert Vaughan: Archbishop of Westminster, Bishop of Salford, founder of the Mill Hill Missionaries" by Robert O'Neil *Theological Studies* 59 no 4 D 1998, p 735-736. <http://www.ts.mu.edu/>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the History Department at DigitalCommons@Fairfield. It has been accepted for inclusion in History Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Fairfield. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@fairfield.edu.

Title: CARDINAL HERBERT VAUGHAN
Author(s): JEFFREY VON ARX
Source: *Theological Studies*. 59.4 (Dec. 1998): p735.
Document Type: Book review
Full Text:

CARDINAL HERBERT VAUGHAN. By Robert O'Neil, M.H.M. New York: Crossroad, 1997.
Pp. viii + 520. \$49.50.

Herbert Vaughan was the third Archbishop of Westminster (1832-1903) in the restored hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales. While in that position, he was involved in the controversy over Anglican orders that resulted in the letter *Apostolicae curae*, and played a role in the beginning of the Modernist controversy. Before that, he served an apprenticeship as protégé and obvious successor to the long-reigning second Archbishop, Henry Edward Manning. Vaughan was present, therefore, either as participant or as close observer, to the history of the Church in England in the first 50 years of its restored existence. As owner of *The Tablet*, which he acquired in 1868, Vaughan was a strong supporter of the Ultramontane position of Manning and an advocate of the papal infallibility decreed at Vatican I. As bishop of Salford (Manchester) from 1872, he was an effective collaborator, both in his diocese and on the national scene, in the romanization of the English Catholic Church carried out by Manning. Vaughan had a life-long interest in the missions, and founded a congregation, St. Joseph's Missionary Society, also known as the Mill Hill Missionaries (from the location of their headquarters outside London) to carry on this work. The American congregation of the Josephites was a breakaway from Mill Hill, following Vaughan's inspiration to work with African-Americans in the southern U.S.

The present volume was commissioned by the Mill Hill Missionaries to prepare an account of their founder for candidates entering the Society from Africa and Asia who might not be familiar with him. This was in order that, in the words of the present Superior General, they could "reflect on the life of the man whose vision they wish to share" (vii). O'Neil is himself a member of the Society who was requested to undertake the task. In the nature of the enterprise, therefore, we are dealing with a work that seeks to inspire as well as to inform, by finding within the life of the founder the charism of the organization.

However, O. is a professional historian, and he has done an excellent job in assembling the sources required to write a scholarly life of a figure who had not received significant biographical treatment since the 1910 "Life" written by Vaughan's cousin and literary executor, John Snead-Cox. Vaughan was, in many matters, a figure of controversy, and so O. has had to consider an extensive literature--which he does unflinchingly--that does not always treat his subject as a hero. There is, therefore, a tension in the book between its institutional agenda and its character as a work of scholarship. This tension manifests itself in O.'s presenting the case "for" and "against" Vaughan on controversial issues, but not himself taking a position. The result is less than satisfactory, as the impression one has of Vaughan is flat. O. seems constrained by his assignment to offer less interpretation than one would have desired. The structure of the book is almost reportorial, moving from event to event in Vaughan's life sometimes without a sense of connection or relationship.

This is unfortunate, as Vaughan remains something of a puzzle and an enigma. By birth and upbringing he was a member of a distinguished "old Catholic" family, and yet he made common cause with the convert Ultramontane Manning, who was viewed as an upstart and an innovator by Vaughan's peers. While insensitive to the intellectual concerns of either liberal Catholics or Modernists, Vaughan reversed Manning's ban on Catholics attending Oxford and Cambridge, and so opened the way for the flowering of Catholic intellectual life in Britain in the 20th century. While progressive by present standards in the area of missiology (he encouraged the acceptance of African-Americans in the Society's seminary in Baltimore that resulted in the ordination of the first black priests in the U.S.), he did not share his predecessor's social concerns, or his empathy for the Irish working class who were the greatest part of his flock in Westminster.

O. is most effective in presenting something of the spiritual side of the man, which he does through the use of correspondence and diaries. Vaughan's spirituality was an interesting mix of old Catholic piety and imported Roman devotions, heavily influenced by the intense interiority and moralism, if not to say scrupulosity, of Protestant evangelicalism that cut across the devotional life of Victorian Christians of every stripe.

This book is worthwhile if only for the footnotes, which demonstrate an impressive amount of research not only on Vaughan's life, but also on the many individuals with whom he had to deal and the issues in which he was involved. It will be an invaluable source for subsequent historians who wish to explain the significance of Vaughan's life in a way that O. has not attempted.

JEFFREY VON ARX, S.J.

Fordham University, New York

Source Citation

VON ARX, JEFFREY. "CARDINAL HERBERT VAUGHAN." *Theological Studies* 59.4 (1998): 735.