

and a remarkable diversity. That enclosed nuns are not wilting in mental or spiritual apathy or atrophy, still less in regimentation, is more than apparent. There is even one Carmelite who has the happy temerity to disagree in black and white with St Thérèse of Lisieux; and what enclosed nun will not sympathise with the nun who says 'At times of weariness when I wish work and obedience, and the Prioress and the sisters to the devil . . .' Most of the replies come from older nuns as being more realistic in outlook, and interpolated in the relevant places are extracts from the writings of St Thérèse which show, more clearly than many works on the saint, her extraordinary spiritual maturity. The whole has been skilfully classified and edited into what might be called at the risk of an accusation of hyperbole, one of the most surprising 'human documents' of the century. All the more human perhaps because dealing with the spiritual realities which are the only things that make sense of human existence.

Most contemplative nuns will be grateful to the editor for the pertinent and very tactful observation that on the whole their standard of philosophical and theological instruction is not 'sufficiently advanced', and that this is the cause of mental and spiritual distress which could be obviated if the lack were supplied. As some of us are aware, these subjects are hardly so much as 'named among us', and being well-versed in St Paul's *obiter dictum*, 'Women should be silent in the churches', we are glad that someone has drawn attention to the conclusion of the apostle's directive, 'Let them take their place as learners',—with the accent on 'let'. As the editor asks, 'Why should the mistaken attitude of a few towards the feminine intellect deprive these women who live with the maximum of love of the maximum of light?'

In spite of this deficiency Father Bro finds that 'contemplatives can experience and summarize exultantly, and reconcile one with another the most difficult truths which the Church has sometimes taken centuries to define . . .' Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit they live closer to reality and to their fellow-men than is generally realized, and in this book their place and work in the mystical body has been triumphantly vindicated.

SR. FELICITY, P. C. C.

NATURE ET MISSION DE L'ÉGLISE, by P. Glorieux; Desclée, n.p.

When a book on the Church, intended as serious, moderately technical theology for both clergy and laity, comes with the recommendation of Cardinal Liénart, it is alarming to find oneself totally disappointed with it.

What we need above all in theology is a profound and thorough exegetical basis. This basis is not merely inadequate in the present case: it is entirely lacking. Scripture is here simply something to be quoted (and, inexplicably, to be quoted as often as not in Latin. How is it possible to see any reason for quoting anything in any language other than either the one it was written in or the one that the reader most naturally uses?). Nor is there any treatment of the Church as the

un-triumphant, pilgrim, servant Church. What we do have is yet another demonstration that to express a fundamentally juridical concept of the Church in terms of the body of Christ is merely to heighten juridicism and triumphalism to the greatest possible degree. Here, faults and abuses in the exercise of authority in the Church are seen as barely existent marginal exceptions, adequately dealt with by, e.g., a parenthetical reference to Joan of Arc. There is no room whatever for considering the possibility that there might ever have been, still less now be surviving, a distortion of the very concept of authority in the Church.

The book fails the ecumenical test. It gives an account of 'the Protestant view' in terms of the most extreme individualism to be found anywhere in Protestantism: we are to suppose that it is logically impossible for a Protestant to have any real sense of the Church at all. The use of the word 'church' for the separated bodies is sometimes supposed to be the very criterion of a fully ecumenical attitude: evidently this is not so. In the section on the Church's attitude to other Churches we learn not only that the salvation of members of these Churches is possible only by unconscious but implicit adherence to the Catholic and Roman Church (one has, of course, no wish to dispute this, properly understood), but also that it is possible only *in spite of* their adherence to their own confessions. If this is not mere repetition to an incredibly meaningless degree, it can only mean that these 'unconscious Catholics' are acting contrary to their unconscious Catholicism by going to church or chapel, accepting the discipline of their own communion, and sharing in its eucharist. Whereas it is surely obvious that they are in precisely these ways expressing their Catholicism and making it concrete. Even without re-opening any questions about the validity, in some sense, of separated sacraments; even without facing the truth (which needs to be faced) that the existence of the separated Churches has a positive meaning in God's designs, given the real failure of his Church, going far beyond individual moral failures, which called them into being: even without raising such points as these, which are indeed a thousand miles removed from this book, it should be possible to see that for a Protestant to take part fully in the life of his own communion is a concrete affirmation of his desire for the Church as community, and that to take part in its eucharist expresses, at the very least, his desire for the eucharist. How can it then have any meaning to say that faithfully practising Protestants are saved *in spite of* their explicit adherence to their own confessions, as though such adherence raised, for them, some further barrier to salvation beyond those affecting baptised non-Catholics adhering to no confession at all?

In proportion to the size of the book and the number of pages it devotes to ecumenism, I have spent an exaggerated amount of space on this point. But it seems to me to be overridingly important as a standard by which to judge any treatment of the Church at this point in history. Moreover, the rigid and inadequate view taken of this matter, with a merely external covering of exhortations to be 'respectful' and 'delicate' in dealing with the separated brethren, seems to me to provide, in fact, an adequate sample of the general approach.

C. HASTINGS