

'Byzantine caesaro-papism', and he is inclined to think that the latest thing he has read on a subject is gospel truth. But for the most part the book is careful, accurate and scholarly. Apart from occasional signs of haste when sentences fail to work, the book is admirably written with many felicitous digressions and *personalia*. A conciliar condemnation of the use of the catapult is made the occasion of a few important remarks on the desirability of a condemnation of nuclear weapons: I do not agree with Mr Watkin's conclusions myself but his point on the futility of such condemnations has to be taken seriously. There are nice pen-portraits from time to time, judiciously acidulated accounts of Sylvester I and Urban VI balanced by a positively touching defence of Alexander VI. Altogether Mr Watkin is the man to go for: at six shillings the paperback version of his book is a bargain.

ERIC JOHN

MISSION ET UNITÉ, by M. J. Le Guillou; Editions du Cerf, 2 vols, 27 NF.

These two volumes offer between them something like six hundred pages of text and a hundred pages of notes. The text is a formidable array of information and reflection, while the notes, being largely bibliographical, make a useful guide to further research in the field of ecumenical relations. Much of the raw material, as the notes make plain, is of German provenance, but of course it is assimilated and reformulated in the lambent style of most French theological writing. It is the kind of thing, in fact, which French Dominicans do particularly well, and if Fr Le Guillou never quite achieves the penetration and vigour of such a distinguished *confrère* as Fr Congar, none the less his book is an honourable contribution to the same genre, and to the same cause. Fr Le Guillou works at the *Istina* study-centre, near Paris. It was originally founded, like the review of the same name, to serve the cause of Christian Russia, but its activities are now extended to work for Christian unity throughout the world. It is in the connection between reunion and mission that Fr Le Guillou finds the practical and theoretical centre of all current Christian activity. The first volume is a historical analysis of Protestantism and Orthodoxy, slanted to bring out the very different interpretations of Christian mission to the world which these two great traditions stand for. The second volume continues the analysis into the history of the Church's attitude towards them, and this finally leads to a theory of the Church, an ecclesiology, which is polarized by the concepts of mission and communion. Fr Le Guillou compares it with various non-Catholic ecclesiologies, and concludes that the idea of communion is the best bridgehead for discussion and negotiation in the ecumenical sphere.

Fr Le Guillou writes out of a deep sense of how vulnerable and precarious it is to be a Christian at all—of how isolated and marginal the faith already is, and how much more so it will be soon. The headlong eruption of the retarded nations is entirely reshaping the political and moral structures of the world. It is desperately urgent that Christians should try to pull together. There may be one or two

Christian countries left, but for the most part we are in the minority everywhere, sometimes hated and hunted, generally only disregarded, like harmless eccentrics. This does not mean that we must take to the hills, abandoning to a new barbarism the latest triumphs of Catholic civilization (Dali, no doubt, and Teilhard de Chardin). What it does mean, however, is that there is no longer the chrysalis of a Christian environment, the stability of settled Christian communities, to disguise from us the essentially and totally *missionary* nature of our existence. We shall soon be back where we were before Constantine. Fr Le Guillou does not take up all the implications of this situation, but he tackles the most important of them: that is how the gospel is to be heard if Christians do not speak with a single voice. It is true that the basic facts of the Christian message have to be restated now in terms of languages and cultures which are perhaps unprecedentedly hostile, but that makes the divisions of Christianity only all the more scandalous. The problem defines itself most painfully in the mission field—in South America, to take Fr Le Guillou's example. How are we to tolerate, in a continent which is at least nominally Catholic, the incursions of numerous Protestant missionaries? Leaving out of the count what may happen if these nations decide that they can overhaul civilization only by totalitarian methods of social and economic reconstruction, and the suppression of religion which that usually means, here we have one, largely decaying, form of Christianity under hostile pressure from another more vigorous form. There is, in fact, as the Protestant bodies draw together in the World Council of Churches, some danger that a rivalry may develop between this powerful Protestant alliance and the Catholic Church, so that, as we are pushed to the margins of social and moral influence in the world, we undermine whatever position we retain by inter-Christian feuds.

The deep-seated fears of Rome which so many other Christians still harbour are slowly breaking down. One hopes that the coming Council, by manifesting the Church's capacity for self-reform and self-renewal, will give fresh and decisive impetus to the ecumenical movement, so that we may face the next fifty critical years together, not divided and opposed. The way in which, during the terrible years after 1933, Protestants and Catholics in Germany drew together, so irrevocably that mutual co-operation and understanding there surpass that anywhere else, offers a good example, but it is not without significance that the World Council is holding its third assembly this autumn in New Delhi, because the non-European members are especially eager to overcome the divisions which originated in Europe, and which European missionaries have reproduced all over the world. Both for that assembly and for our own council, as well as for the uneasy role of the Orthodox Church between the two, no more effective and timely preparation is to be found than Fr Le Guillou's study, with its discreet learning, large perspectives, and unflinching fraternal compassion.

FERGUS KERR O.P.