

the same of the Bible. The real point is that to say so is to say nothing useful, when so much that is useful can be said. To Muslims the Quran is clear: Mr Avery speaks, and very well, of how it has moved him in an Eastern setting; but we have to think first of what it means to the Muslim in his everyday surroundings; I see, for example, tears in the eyes of an Iraqi clerk when he hears a cheap gramophone record of the sura *Miriam* (with its superficially erroneous but profoundly fine devotion to Mary and Jesus).

I am at one with your reviewer in his wish to see a book that will cover the whole ground of the comparative cultures of East and West, but in the present state of scholarship we must all wait for it. Not only I but many others are meantime contributing material, and any judgment of Islam should surely take into account the work of all these modern scholars, and of medieval commentators taken in their context and their full complexity.

It is worse than useless to revive ancient grievances—and Muslims, unhappily, have grievances as well as we. Nor, when we survey the modern world and compare the infidelity of Christian and Muslim nations alike, need either side boast. A distinguished Persian visitor to this country recently asked me, with some natural hesitation, whether I habitually went to church. When I said that I did, he sighed, and commented, 'I like people who believe'. This is a sentiment that I think it good to reciprocate. Of late years in Baghdad people have been going to the mosques who did not go before, and ordinary men respond with symbolic acts of belief to atheist propaganda (sometimes with danger of death). When we see little printed posters stuck up in the streets that assert, 'God is great', we cannot feel that we have no part in it. There is an obvious Catholic parallel in Eastern Europe. Surely we must add to our knowledge of what separates human beings an understanding of what unites us?

Yours sincerely,

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## REVIEWS

THE CHURCHES AND THE CHURCH. A Study of Ecumenism. By Bernard Leeming, S.J. (Darton, Longman and Todd; 35s.)

Events are moving quickly in these days in regard to our attitude to our separated brethren. Pope John XXIII has made it very clear, in a number of pronouncements, that the ecumenical spirit of contact and understanding is a missionary and apostolic spirit, calculated to commend our Faith, which is the fullness of Faith, to our separated brethren.

This makes Father Leeming's new book, *The Churches and the Church*, particularly timely in its appearance. It is in fact the first of its kind in English, a fully documented handbook to Catholic Ecumenism, giving the history, growth, aims, difficulties and conflicts of the world-wide movement whose chief organ is the World Council of Churches. He treats the whole

of this wide subject in relation to the part that the Catholic Church, and Catholics as individual persons, can play in imbibing and using its spirit and techniques, and marking out the areas of danger where they cannot.

The Ecumenical spirit is only fifty years old, a new phenomenon in its present form, which the movement of that name has produced and is propagating throughout divided Christendom, not excluding the Roman Catholic Church. It is a spirit that engages a Christian in search for truth wherever it may be found, and one of the things it teaches us Catholics is a principle of action deeply embedded in our classical theology and spirituality; that all truth, wherever found, is the work of the Holy Spirit, and that a person baptized and incorporated in Christ's Mystical Body the Church, which the Holy Spirit inhabits, must never cease to grow in the apprehension of that truth.

In reviewing Father Leeming's book it will be best to touch upon a few main points in his exposition, rather than to make a synopsis of its whole contents. It is essentially a book to be read and re-read by those, and they are fast increasing in numbers, who really want to understand ecumenism and act in its spirit.

First, there is his account of the work of the Ecumenical Movement amongst the non-Catholic Churches which enjoy membership of the World Council of Churches, including some Orthodox and other ancient Churches of the East. This part is statistical but not dull and it gives a clear picture both historical and contemporary of growth and present attainment. Father Leeming's reading is wide, and he covers the ground with wonderful completeness; all the chief authorities are quoted or named and there is an excellent bibliography.

Second, he analyses the different trends within the Movement; there is an anti-Catholic element which would exclude the Catholic Church from the purview of the World Council. This is strong in the U.S.A., but, as he shows, many Protestant bodies which are violently anti-Catholic are also fundamentalist and anti-ecumenical as well. They have not accepted membership of the World Council and stand apart from its work and influence. This applies specially to sections of the Baptist Churches. The best elements in the Movement recognize that 'Rome cannot be left out'. There is also a divergence of view within the World Council as to the advisability of its proposed union with the International Missionary Council. The latter, being specifically missionary in its outlook, is likely to influence the impartiality of the World Council, which should have for its sole aim the direction and aiding of its member Churches in their work for unity. It should not be involved directly in missionary strategy.

Third, Father Leeming gives a cogent explanation of the reasons why the Catholic Church, as such, will not engage at organizational level in the World Council's activities or accept membership in it. He is more positive in his approach to this question than many Catholic ecumenists and emphasizes the valuable witness this abstention affords of the unique position of the Church and notes that it also cuts out a number of possible complications for the World Council organization itself.

Fourth, there is an excellent analysis of the *Instruction* of the Holy Office to Local Ordinaries on the Ecumenical Movement 1949, which is sometimes called the Ecumenists' Charter. This document is printed in full (in translation); this is the only Catholic book where it can be found, though it is printed in Bishop G. K. A. Bell's *Documents on Christian Unity*, Series IV. While pointing out the precautionary measures ordered by the Holy See to safeguard abuses in 'reunion' work, Father Leeming does not fail to emphasize that it is also a movement which the Bishops are instructed to promote and foster in every legitimate way; by study, work and prayer, among priests and laity alike, and that the *Instruction* recommends that centres of expert knowledge concerning the ecumenical apostolate should be set up where possible in every diocese.

It is to be hoped that this long-desired book will be circulated and pondered over in seminaries and religious houses, and much read in presbyteries and by the educated laity.

HENRY ST JOHN, O.P.

MEMOIRS OF A RENAISSANCE POPE. THE COMMENTARIES OF PIUS II. An abridgment. (Allen and Unwin; 30s.)

It is surely not without dramatic irony that the *Commentarii* of Pope Pius II (Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini) on the 'memorable events of his time', though written in order to transmit to posterity in his own words a favourable picture of his own personality and pontificate (1458-1464), should have had to wait nearly five hundred years before being published in full. In the earliest late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth century editions not only was the authorship falsely attributed to a German copyist but the text itself was heavily cut to suit the somewhat prim counter-reformation standards of propriety. The discovery by Pastor in 1905 of the original text, mainly in Pius' own hand, made the papal authorship incontestable, and between 1936 and 1957 an English translation of the full text of this unique example of papal self-revelation came out in five volumes of the Smith College (Northampton, Mass.) 'Studies in History'. A heavily abridged edition of this has now been published in an arresting scarlet dust-cover and under the alluring title of *Memoirs of a Renaissance Pope* by Messrs George Allen and Unwin. The abridgment is the work of the original editor and translator and has been made not with considerations of ecclesiastical propriety in mind but in order to bring the memoirs within the reach of the general reader. Practically all the longer parts dealing with German, Bohemian and other non-Italian affairs, where Pius' knowledge was not first-hand, have been omitted, while over-long speeches put by the author into his own mouth, and occasionally the mouths of others, have been pruned throughout. What remains is concerned chiefly, so far as politics go, with Italian affairs.

Pius II was a remarkable figure, a man of scholarly and critical disposition and not lacking in literary and diplomatic abilities. The *Commentarii*, however, both in the full and the abridged version, are perhaps best described as *Memoirs* since they are completely lacking in form and proportion. They touch indeed upon all the main Italian problems of the Pontificate