

THE PRIEST IN UNION WITH CHRIST. By The Rev. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. Translated by Rev. G. W. Shelton, S.T.L. (The Mercier Press; 18s.)

Read as a sequel to the same author's *Our Saviour and His Love for Us*, it must be admitted that the present book comes rather as an anti-climax. Père Garrigou-Lagrange is one of the leading exponents of Thomist theology in our day, and when he sets out, as he does here, to consider 'the spiritual life of a priest and his special priestly functions', the reader anticipates that the subject will be treated in the light of the great tradition represented by such a master. This hope is not realised: the teaching of St Thomas, of the Fathers, of the Liturgy, are referred to comparatively little, whereas the writers of more recent times are quoted with an almost excessive frequency and veneration. The result is a somewhat loosely constructed collection of passages on various aspects of the priest's life rather than the integrated essay of simple grandeur which this book might have been.

Frequent repetitions are a consequence of this lack of unity; another, the seeming contradictions: whether, for instance, the grace of communion is the same under one or both species (pp. 74 and 79). The danger of the attempt to 'christianise' Marxist doctrine which, according to the introduction, is the first of the three main points the author proposes to underline, is not mentioned again until page 131, and then only very briefly. On page 76 there is a paragraph entitled: *The testimony of the Liturgy, as presented by Fr Olier*, quoting, in effect, what the founder of Saint Sulpice has to say about the priest's communion—but containing nothing whatever about 'the testimony of the Liturgy'. On page 127 we are told that the ciborium is 'consecrated in the strict sense of the word and not merely blessed'.

In view of what has been said it may be granted that the translator has had no easy task, and occasional obscurities such as: 'Habitual failings which affect the intellect are . . . an authoritative attitude in ruling others, or the opposite failing of extreme leniency towards those who oppress the weak' (p. 183), or needless translations like: 'John James Rousseau' (p. 124), should not prevent it being recognised that he has accomplished it carefully and, on the whole, successfully.

DESMOND SCHLEGEL, O.S.B.

L'ÉGLISE DE FRANCE ET LA COMMUNION DES ENFANTS. By M. Gaucheron (Rencontres. Editions du Cerf; Blackfriars.)

LA COMMUNION SOLENNELLE EN FRANCE. By H.-Ch. Chéry, O.P. (Rencontres. Editions du Cerf; Blackfriars.)

France is still engaged in the collective examination of her conscience, this time on the very practical and important matter of the First Com-

munion of children. It is well known that the French custom of *Communion Solennelle* at the age of about twelve made the operation of the decree of Pius X difficult to bring into effect. Various methods were tried—some of them described with mordant humour in Fr Gaucheron's book—but few seem to be satisfied with what has been achieved. To find out the exact state of affairs and to see what remedies could be applied, the *Centre de Pastorale Liturgique* sent out a questionnaire, the results of which are summarised in Père Chéry's book. It cannot have brought much comfort to the French clergy. There is still a certain amount of confusion and it cannot be said that Pius X's decree is fully operated. There are many problems and difficulties (which, largely thanks to our school system, we have not to face in this country), but the upshot of these two books is that the *Communion Solennelle* should become a profession of faith leading the child to look to the immediate future when he will have to take up adult responsibilities in the world. If the desiderata of the writers of these books and of those who answered their questions are fulfilled, then French youth will go out into the world well equipped to meet their responsibilities.

Perhaps these books have not a great deal to teach us in England though we must admire the zeal of the French clergy in seeking solutions to their problems, and we might consider the possibilities of a special ceremony of Profession of Faith when our children leave school.

J.D.C.

HUMANITY AND DEITY. By Wilbur Marshall Urban. (George Allen and Unwin; 25s.)

Professor Urban's book of 474 dense pages is 'an attempt at a restatement of the traditional view of the relation of God to man'. It is an answer to modern religious errors such as the exclusion of the supernatural by positivists like Comte, on the one hand, and the exclusion of the rational from religion by Barth and Brunner, on the other. This book is concerned with such subjects as the language of religion and theology, the proofs for the existence of God, the relations of religion to science, mysticism and poetry: its style is abstract and its language that of modern philosophy, which is far from that of current Catholic thought.

While one welcomes a book on religion by a serious thinker who often adopts the conclusions, if not the arguments, of great Catholic thinkers, it must be confessed that the author's criticism of religious errors such as those of Tolstoy, Kierkegaard and William James is often more convincing than his exposition of 'traditional theism'. While St Thomas is quoted more often than any other writer, and