

of the earlier sections is not very clear, but the relationship between the Church and the various dissident bodies is fully discussed with an abundant documentation from the magisterium and weighty authors. It will repay careful reading.

The second book under review is a series of meditations on various aspects of ecumenical work from the pen of Fr Dumont, O.P., the director of the Parisian study centre 'Istina'. Fr Henry St John, O.P., the translator, has contributed an Introduction of great value, the more so as Fr Dumont's own writings presuppose considerable knowledge of these matters on the part of his readers.

The earlier meditations follow the liturgical year, seeking to find in each mystery some lesson for those interested in the reunion of Christendom. The later part of the book deals directly with topics and problems specially connected with ecumenical work, such as the marks of the Church, faith and order, or intercommunion. As an appendix to the meditation on the Church as both body and bride of Christ there is printed an extract from Bossuet's *Lettre à Une Demoiselle de Metz* dealing with the same theme. The letter of the Holy Office to the Archbishop of Boston on the interpretation of *extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* is also included as an appendix. The only adverse criticism which may be formulated against this excellent little work is that perhaps it falls between two stools. It is manifestly not an introduction to the subject; at the same time the very nature of its division into meditations precludes a development of the themes treated which would satisfy more experienced readers. None the less, for those with some theological reading to their credit the study of this book will be rewarding in view of the forthcoming Ecumenical Council.

RICHARD BLUNDELL, S.J.

MARY, MOTHER OF FAITH. By Josef Weiger. (Burns and Oates; 21s.)

Many books on our Lady fall into one of two categories: the piously meditative, based on free use of the imagination, and the rigorously theological, based on strict fidelity to the data of revelation. Each sort has its contribution to make, but it might be better were the two not so often kept strictly apart. Something of a combination is offered us in this present volume, richly produced and of two hundred pages, well printed, but, disappointingly for such a book, lacking illustration.

It falls into three parts, the first treating of episodes in our Lady's life, the second dealing with her mediation as mother of faith, the third comprising various meditations, including some on the mysteries of the rosary. In the first part Fr Weiger bases his treatment closely on the Bible and shows a deep understanding of the events in question and of

what is implied by them. It is here, perhaps, that he is at his best, revealing very effectively the nature of our Lady's vocation and the way she met and fulfilled it. Particularly good is his account of the significance of the events connected with the birth and sanctification of the Baptist. The value of this part of the book is evidently due to its subjects having been given deep and loving meditation.

The later parts by comparison seem less successful in this respect and there is a passage also where the author has opened the door to the sort of empty emotionalism that he elsewhere avoids. A more serious criticism is that throughout the book the writing leaves much to be desired. Were style alone responsible one might suspect the translator, but often the sequence of thought itself is hard to follow. What should have proved stimulating expositions make instead a confused impression, losing much of their effect. There is so much of value in the book, however, that it would be well worthwhile to revise and re-issue it in a shorter and less expensive form.

PHILIP HOLDSWORTH, O.S.B.

ST ANTHONY AND HIS TIMES. By Mary Purcell. (M. H. Gill; 19s. 6d.)

Those who want to cherish their illusions about St Anthony of Padua and regard him merely as wonder-worker and celestial lost-property office should leave this book alone. To those who prefer historical accuracy and wish to find the real man, born Fernando de Bulhoes of Lisbon, Miss Purcell's work will be an excellent source of ultra-reliable information.

An enormous amount of exhaustive research must have been undertaken, for which future writers on St Anthony will be deeply grateful, and there is a comprehensive list of sources and their respective merits at the end of the book.

There is perhaps a sense of compression, a certain anxiety to leave no chink in the armour of authenticity and to include as much history as possible in a short space. The saint is stripped of crusted deposits of legend and imaginative hagiography, the remaining sub-stratum being carefully analysed. He emerges as a much more attractive figure than the sweetly simpering, egg-headed friar we see so often in print and plaster.

A short, swarthy, corpulent man was Anthony, silent about himself, eloquent about God; not renowned for miracles in his life-time but for preaching. A strong balancing influence in the Order of Friars Minor at a very difficult period; severe to the worldly, loving to the repentant, and without exception kind and courteous to women.

That favourite picture of St Anthony with the Holy Child in his arms, it appears in the light of research, is a figment of imagination.