

allegiance to Christ Jesus as Lord and God. The effect of this fellowship when truly attained is a first hand, intimate understanding, born of supernatural charity, of how others of widely differing background and dogmatic belief think, speak and believe concerning Christ's redeeming work in themselves and the means by which it touches their lives. Such a relationship if real is reciprocal and involves on our part communicating knowledge as well as receiving it. It is a hard and costly process, yet unless divided Christendom is prepared to make the effort it is difficult to see how the human heart is ever to be made fit for the work of Reunion, which must be begun by men but which can only be perfected by the Holy Ghost.

It will be doubted by many whether even if desirable this oecumenical relationship is possible for Catholics since the authority claimed by the Church is unique and absolutely exclusive and would of necessity make the relationship unilateral and consequently ineffective. It is the fear that this exclusiveness might become obscured which is the main ground for the refusal of the Holy See to allow *formal* participation in the so-called oecumenical movement. There still remains however the question of private and individual participation which is sanctioned by the Holy See with due safeguards. A Catholic who wishes to make up his mind about this problem could not do better than begin by a study of this small volume with a view to grasping the nature of oecumenicity and how far a Catholic can have the oecumenical mind. Its great merit is that its author sees the full depth of the problem of the Reunion of Christendom and does not deal with shallow solutions. There is a sense in which his mind may be truly said to be Catholic though he is far from holding the completeness of Catholic truth. On the whole however he understands the Catholic position as clearly as any outsider can understand it, though in the paragraph in which he equates fundamentalism with biblical inerrancy he shows that he has much to learn about the nature and scope of Catholic biblical exegesis.

H. St.J.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST. By Arthur H. Ryan. (Clonmore & Reynolds; 8s.6d.)

For once a publisher's blurb is a reliable guide. Mgr Ryan's 'introduction to the Church' does 'combine learning and lucidity' and without giving any points away has none of the aggressiveness which so often mars Catholic apologetics. This book sets out its aims clearly—did Christ found a church? what sort of church? where is it today? The one and a half hundred pages which answer these questions are a model of scholarship minus humbug, for although the learning is compressed it is clear-headed. There are excellent two-page summaries of the history of the Greek schism, the Lutheran revolt, John Knox and suchlike subjects. The word scholarship however must not be misunderstood. This is not a book for scholars only; in fact, some

scholars may quibble over the simplification of many quotations. Such simplification however does not distort the truth, it merely cuts away problems and difficulties which will never arise for most readers to consider. It is therefore a learned book for the unlearned, the sort of thing that is not written often enough these days. Mgr Ryan examines the nature of the Church from the evidence of Scripture, tradition and the events of the last two thousand years, and the book should be valuable to many sorts of people, the student, the schoolmaster, the neo-convert, the enquirer. The directness of approach is matched with a simple honesty in facing facts, pleasant and unpleasant. Because he has the facts at his finger-tips and shows no desire to keep any of them up his sleeve Mgr Ryan is in a very strong position when he wants to point out that Borgias could produce a saint as well as a bad Pope. It is refreshing to find a few shrewd comments on the limitation of that overpraised book 'The Robe', and even shrewder remarks (p. 90) on the true nature of loyalty. It is a pity that such a good book is marred here and there by lapses (clearly unintentional) into stock 'ecclesiasticisms' of speech, e.g., 'his successor must *needs* be bishop. . . .' These things are inclined to muddle the clarity of the thought. The book is good enough to deserve to have them corrected, and perhaps the printers might be persuaded to follow a consistent policy in the use of Greek and Erse type. It is good to see most of the Greek and Erse words printed in their native characters, but difficult to see why Roman type should be used for a few.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.



EXTRACTS

FATHER GERARD SITWELL, O.S.B., is contributing a series of articles on Walter Hilton to the *Downside Review*. The second of these (Winter 1949/50) deals with contemplation in the *Scale*, and shows in particular the stress Hilton lays on the illumination by love; charity proceeding from 'love unformed, that is God himself' causes all this illumination in knowing. Father Sitwell points to a peculiar characteristic of Hilton's description of contemplation—that it is judged by 'a lively feeling of grace and privy of heart'. A man who is high in the grace of God can experience the presence of grace within him, which is one aspect of the experiential knowledge of God brought by charity. For St Thomas this experience brings only a conjectural knowledge of grace in the soul, but it is typical of a great deal of English spirituality, particularly in rather exaggerated forms among non-conformists, that the pious man should receive some sort of assurance of God's love. Few other mystical writers lay any stress on a 'feeling of grace', but Fr Sitwell shows that it is not a sensible feeling but a transitory awareness of God's