

Reviews

BISHOPS, edited by the Bishop of Llandaff; Faith Press, 18s.

PAPE ET EVEQUES AU PREMIER CONCILE DU VATICAN, by G. Dejaifve, S.J.; Desclée de Brouwer, n.p.

LA THEOLOGIE DE L'EPISCOPAT AU PREMIER CONCILE DU VATICAN, by J-P. Torrell, O.P., Editions du Cerf, n.p.

One of the contributions to the Bishop of Llandaff's symposium is entitled 'Are Bishops Necessary?' The same question was put by a meeting of grammar school sixth-formers in the Potteries to an interdenominational brainstrust on which I was the R.C. representative last January. My irresponsible answer 'Unfortunately, yes' was received with the dead silence it undoubtedly deserved—though I presume it is one which most bishops would themselves echo. I was impressed by the answer of the Baptist member, who said that if it was a matter of the function of a bishop, his bishoping or bishopship, of which the essence is the overseeing of a local Christian community, then he considered that he personally was as much a bishop as anyone.

This type of answer seems to be very much in tune with the most up-to-date Anglican-Nonconformist dialogue on this thorny question. They have agreed to give up arguing about *episcopi*, and to examine *episcopo* instead. Two things emerge from their doing so that are of particular interest to the Catholic. The first is that no one any longer thinks that appeal to the New Testament is enough of itself to settle arguments between different Christian bodies on Church constitution, since the New Testament does not provide a clear and unambiguous model. This should allow much more play to arguments and considerations of Tradition, on which Catholics have always relied for determining the ambiguities and obscurities of the New Testament, especially and naturally in such practical and day-to-day matters as Church government and the sacraments. The second is that while Free Churchmen may accept the necessity of *episcopo* and even of individual *episcopi* set aside by the Church to exercise it, they will continue to find it extremely hard to see anything *sacramental* about it. As the Congregationalist contributor to this volume puts it: 'If because of what seems to them an unduly ecclesiastical understanding of grace (related to ministerial succession), the Churches without this succession are regarded as in some essential ways not Churches at all, Free Churchmen will have to defer the argument until they are persuaded that the Roman Church in Spain, which has such a succession, is in some essential respects more a Christian Church than, say, the Church of Scotland, which lacks succession in that form'; which is a *reductio ad absurdum* indeed!

Most of the contributions (all except three are by Anglicans) are descriptive of a bishop's work rather than theological. The most telling and effective thumb-nail sketch is one of those not by an Anglican, namely Dr Heenan's. But he says one thing, which is in fact echoed by two of his Episcopalian colleagues, which is surprising; that 'the greatest responsibility of the bishop is to prove himself a father to his clergy'; and 'although the first duty of a bishop concerns the sanctification of the clergy, his ultimate responsibility is for the whole flock'. Practically it must be so, in the government of a large modern diocese; but *ought* it to be so, clergy first, then people? And is there not then a good case for so limiting the size of a bishop's diocese that he can make the whole flock his immediate and total responsibility as well as his ultimate one, a responsibility which it is the function of his clergy to help him fulfil? Perhaps this is one of the things concerning bishops that the Council will discuss.

That bishops and bishopship will have a prominent place on its agenda seems to be generally agreed. Hence the two other books on our list. Fr Dejaifve's in the *Présence Chrétienne* series is an informative book on a popular level, proving by copious quotations from the records of Vatican I that the bishops were free to speak their own minds, and that the Council was not a mere put-up job, a prefabricated façade erected in front of the hideous machinery of papal autocratic absolutism.

Fr Torrell writes a bigger and more technical book of historical theology. It was undoubtedly the fear of many bishops of the minority at the Council (whose uninhibited vocal powers Fr Dejaifve so amply illustrates), that papacy was threatening to swallow episcopacy. Fr Torrell shows how under pressure from their objections the *Deputatio de fide*, which was responsible for piloting the Constitution *Pastor Aeternus*, wherein the papal prerogatives are defined, worked out and gave expression to a statement exquisitely dovetailing papacy and episcopacy. Unfortunately the second half of this statement, intended to be the second Constitution *De Ecclesia Christi*, a sequel to *Pastor Aeternus*, never achieved public and official utterance. The author quotes extensively from the draft of this second Constitution, which was the work of the theologian Kleutgen. Perhaps Vatican II will use Kleutgen's draft as a starting point for its work on bishops. Books like Fr Torrell's should be of very considerable service, among others, to the Council's members.

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THE CHURCH AND THE GOSPEL, by Jean Guitton; Burns and Oates, 35s.

In *The Church and The Gospel*, M. Guitton continues the programme he began in his book *The Problem of Jesus*. Following the same method he examines the Church as a phenomenon, to see whether it can be accounted for as consistent with her founder, Jesus, and with his person and mission. The book is professedly ecumenical, for it contrasts the Catholic and Protestant minds: 'It is a question