

Smalley in an essay of great freshness and vividness on the medieval Christian schools.

The third main part also consists of a set of solo discussions of particular vernacular traditions with, for example, Fr Kenelm Foster on Italian Bibles both Judaic and Christian, and Dr C. A. Robson on French Bibles. It is surely possible only for a few to read this set

of essays without being *bouleversé* by the achievement, the range and even the frequency of medieval vernacular undertakings. Almost fifty well-described plates complete the volume. The *Cambridge History of the Bible* is surely set fair to become one of the most successful and important of the Cambridge Histories.

DAVID LUSCOMBE

**LA CHARGE PASTORALE DES EVEQUES.** Texte, traduction et commentaires. Collection 'Unam Sanctam': *Les Editions du Cerf*, 1969. 466 pp.

This is the twelfth volume produced by Les Editions du Cerf under the direction of Yves Congar, O.P., with specific reference to Vatican II and the post-conciliar period. Concerned entirely with the Decree 'Christus Dominus', it first provides the Latin text with a parallel French translation. These are followed by a series of commentaries. Mgr W. Onclin of Louvain, a member of the preparatory Commission, gives a general introduction on the origin, title and structure of the Decree: and then considers in detail the rôle of bishops in the universal Church and their relationship with the Holy See. Obviously his treatment cannot be fully up to date because it does not include the recent Synod wherein the pattern of collegial relationships has developed so considerably. All the same, his assessment is of importance up to the Summer of 1969.

Father H. M. Legrand, O.P., of Saulchoir then has a commentary of more than one hundred pages on the nature of the local Church, the pastoral image of the bishop under the traditional three-fold classification, his relationship with the civil authority, the topical question of episcopal appointment and retirement, and finally the problems connected with the revision of boundaries. This is followed by an interesting documentary of the re-arrangement of the Parisian province.

Mgr R. Bézac, Bishop of Dax, then comments on the section of the Decree dealing with coadjutors and auxiliaries, and Père Boulard does the same for the diocesan curia and councils. He also has a good section on the diocesan clergy. Mgr N. Jubany, Bishop of Gerona in Spain, completes this picture regarding religious working in the pastoral field. Professor C. Munier of Strasbourg contributes an important section on national episcopal conferences and Mgr Badré, ordinary of the Forces, speaks of his own particular pastorate.

Professor Bernhard of Strasbourg gives a

most valuable commentary on the norms of implementation which have already been issued regarding four of the conciliar decrees in so far as they concern bishops and the motu proprio *De Episcoporum Muneribus*

Altogether, this is a remarkable volume and covers the whole historical, theological and canonical fields far more thoroughly than anything else we have seen. It seems to me both fuller and better arranged than, for example, the Commentary edited by Herbert Vorgrimmler which has been translated from the original German and published in this country. On the other hand, all works of the calibre of these are greatly to be welcomed and in one way there cannot be too many of them if, as in this case, they restore a balance of expert and legitimate theological pondering on the great conciliar decrees. Until now, our libraries were flabby with paper-backs and although there is a need to popularize contemporary theological thought this can rarely be done with any dependability until the great commentaries have become available and been fully pondered themselves.

It is fascinating for one who is also a bishop, and who has by virtue of his office to be implementing the conciliar decrees, at any rate experimentally, in the purely pastoral field. Theory generally precedes practice. In this case, however, there is a continual existential reciprocation which is playing its part in the development of both and we should be unrealistic if we did not face the fact that mistakes are likely to be made in both categories. Indeed, one of the great advantages of the Editions du Cerf series is that the close interaction of theory and practice is fairly constantly exemplified.

Clearly, one could ruminate at great length on the many different aspects of the Decree and the commentaries which have followed. I find in doing so—and to keep issues really clear—one has constantly to be returning to the great and lengthy chapter three of *Lumen Gentium* of which *Christus Dominus* is the

theoretical and practical development. In fact, one is ever increasingly led back to *Lumen Gentium* as the *fons et origo* of all conciliar and post-conciliar thought and as the clear voice of the Holy Spirit for our time.

The section of the present work which fascinated me most personally was Père Legrand's discursus entitled 'Un Nouveau Miroir de L'Évêque?'. Certainly, as a bishop, one finds in practice something of a dilemma regarding priorities. His responsibilities are no longer confined exclusively to the local Church (maybe they never were in theory) but he is called also very often into the collegial activi-

ties of the *conferentia episcoporum* on the national level and with increasing frequency on the international level also. Vatican II would suggest that he cannot abdicate responsibility on any level. But as a matter of principle, what is to be put first? Père Legrand asks revealing questions without giving any definitive answer. I believe, at the moment, most bishops are doing the same. 'Est il possible d'exprimer de façon plus radicale ce que doit être le service d'un successeur des Apôtres dont le ministère a été établi par Dieu dans et pour l'Eglise?'

✠ WM. GORDON WHEELER

**A HISTORY OF RELIGION EAST AND WEST: an Introduction and Interpretation**, by Trevor Ling, *Macmillan*, London, 1968. 464 pp. Student edition: price 30s.

With Dr Trevor Ling's book as an 'introduction' to the history of religions we have no quarrel. On the contrary, it is competently composed, critically written and, in so far as it is possible for one person to undertake such a task, reasonably complete. After sections on ancient far- and near-Eastern religions as well as biblical and extra-biblical prophetism (Zarathustra and the Buddha) come chapters on Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The concluding considerations are consecrated to the lot of the several religions in contemporary industrial society. Finally there is a brief but optimistic epilogue on the future of religious belief. An anthropologist would regret that the religions the history of which is in question are 'historical religions', since primitive religions are and have been of prime importance methodologically speaking. It is with the author's work as an 'interpretation' that we begin to raise objections—not with this author in particular but with historians of comparative religion in general or at least with those who appear to exaggerate the value of this discipline. To our mind it is unfortunate that not a few theologians and philosophers when they come to speak of religion have recourse to the historian of religion rather than to the more sociologically slanted specialist.

Logically such specialists should have nothing to fear from the historian of religion's generalizations and comparisons for, properly understood, abstraction does not lead to an impoverishment but to an enrichment of empirical data by pinpointing its essential structure. Psychologically, however, the fieldworker often feels that the broad definitions and categoric characterizations of the comparatist fail to do justice to

the complexity of his findings. The empirically minded monographer finds it hard to accept that the theorist's archetypal patterns or basic structures lay bare a semantic strata more real and relevant than his own. He finds it even harder to account for the fascination such scholars—one thinks of Mircea Eliade in particular—seem to exercise over a certain type of theologian and philosopher. These latter appear to be labouring under a latent platonism in that they tend to locate the real at the level of overall trends and fundamental categories of which the existential is but an exemplification. (One thinks of the way the infinite variety of primitive creeds and cults have been dismissed as 'Nature religions'.) It is not that the historian of religion's statements are pointless platitudes or his categories so common-denominator as to be contentless. The comparatist has a useful if somewhat thankless task to perform of collating more specialized studies within a general heuristic framework. He functions as an interim stock taker. But it remains our conviction that for the philosopher or theologian interested in religion, a well-chosen monograph can be more rewarding reading than the synthetic summaries furnished by the historian of religions.

Lest we appear too critical of the author's efforts, let us reiterate our initial remarks: we found little to fault in his work. His book is a miniature encyclopedia of readable information, conveniently and coherently arranged. We appreciate especially the happy balance he struck between the consideration of social and psychological factors, space being given to both creative personalities and environmental forces. We endorse too his opinion that the