

bulk of the text deals with the Malabar (Kerala) Christians from the time of the coming of the Portuguese in 1497, and is mainly concerned with that majority of them who remained faithful to communion with the Apostolic See. This book is therefore complementary to Bishop L. W. Brown's excellent *Indian Christians of St Thomas* (reviewed in *BLACKFRIARS* for January, 1957), which concentrated on the Jacobite dissidents. Cardinal Tisserant's handling of a long, complex and not uniformly edifying story is cool and balanced, thoroughly expert and well documented. But the uninformed reader would have been greatly helped by the provision of a schematic table, showing the origins, dates and relationships of the various Christian communities in Malabar today.

Cardinal Tisserant makes no formal judgments and points no morals. There is no need to. At a time when the need to 'naturalize' Christianity in India, as in all missionary countries, is widely recognized, it is obviously most unfortunate that the Syro-Indian Catholics should be so heavily westernized—and this is not a matter simply of liturgical hybridism. That is why the emergence and rapid growth of the 'Malankara' body, originating with the reconciliation of the formerly Jacobite Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos in 1930, is so important. The business of Archbishop Menezes and the Synod of Diamper is examined fully and very fairly; but after all that was only the beginning; the naivety of Father Antony of Bassein, the working according to 'an opinion which Rome has always refused to acknowledge', was continued over 350 years (pp. 37-38).

The translation is rather pedestrian, and the reader is confronted by such strange words as Antiochian, finalize, Sassanide, euphoria, and padres (for C.M.S. clergymen); there is a confusing slip on page 192, where 'Catholics' is printed for 'Catholicos's'. But Father Hambye has made some valuable additions, among them appendices giving lists of hierarchs of various churches and a chronology, and he has furnished a truly impressive bibliography of nearly fifty pages. To that bibliography *Eastern Christianity in India* is an English addition of first-rate importance.

DONALD ATTWATER

MARIA MONTESSORI—HER LIFE AND WORK. By E. M. Standing. (Hollis and Carter; 21s.)

Every Catholic interested in education will welcome Mr Standing's book. Here, at long last, is a full authoritative account, written by a Catholic, of the much-misunderstood 'Montessori Method'—the life-work of a great Catholic educator and pioneer. Particularly in Chapters 9 and 17, 'The sensorial foundation of intellectual life' and 'Liberty in education—true and false', Mr Standing dissipates two of

the most usual criticisms made against the Montessori Method: the rigid use of apparatus and the unrestrained freedom in the class-room. He shows clearly that far from being rigidly tied down to the apparatus, this is at the service of the child—a means to an end—and the child is at perfect liberty to use the apparatus much or little or not at all, according to his need. Mr Standing explains how allowing the child to work at the apparatus for as long as he likes without interference, enables him to consolidate what he already knows and to make 'discoveries' that are not possible if he has to work to a limited timetable. In Chapter 14, on 'Movement and mental assimilation', Mr Standing throws further light on these 'discoveries'. He also makes clear in Chapter 9 the development of the power of abstraction from the use of concrete material.

With regard to 'unrestrained freedom' in the class-room, Mr Standing makes it plain that the freedom Dr Montessori wishes, has clearly defined limits and must never be confused with mere 'doing as you like'. In Chapter 18, 'The Montessori Directress', are clear directives for the teacher on her rôle in this ordered liberty—on how and when to interfere, and how and when to guide and direct, so that the children are free and yet not 'abandoned'.

Throughout the book, Mr Standing brings out that for Dr Montessori it was the child who mattered, rather than a system; and that it was for the child and his needs that she provided a rich variety of purposeful material in a prepared environment.

All 'Montessorians' are accused of an exaggerated enthusiasm for 'the Method' and Mr Standing is no exception to the rule. But what those who look on the Montessori Method from the outside cannot understand, is the feelings of teachers who live and work fully according to Dr Montessori's principles, when they see the amazing results that system gives—results which Dr Ballard, H.M.I., years ago called 'the miracle of Montessori'.

The extensive work done by Dr Montessori for the teaching of religion is obviously only touched on cursorily in a general book of this nature but the principles of Thomistic philosophy which underlie her own educational theories cannot but be noted.

We cannot help regretting that so much matter had to be compressed into one volume. Mr Standing's book would perhaps have been better in two volumes, one for Dr Montessori's own life, and one for her work. In presenting so clearly her work in education, Mr Standing has hardly been able to do full justice to the vivid and charming personality and genius of this great pioneer to whom education owes so much.

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