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The Purpose of Missions: Pioneer Theories of Missiology

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THE PURPOSE OF MISSIONS

PIONEER THEORIES OF MISSIOLOGY. By Ronan Hoffman, O.F.M. Conv. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1960. xiv, 182p.

This Gregorian University doctorate thesis is principally about Lawrence Cardinal Brancati de Laurea, O.F.M. Conv. (1612-1693). In order to bring out Brancati's position in missiology, the author has instituted a comparison between him and three other writers on the missions of the same period: the Jesuit, José de Acosta, whose *DE PROCURANDA INDORUM SALUTE* appeared in 1588; the Carmelite, Thomas a Jesu, whose *DE PROCURANDA SALUTE OMNIUM GENTIUM* was published in 1613; and the Franciscan of the Strict Observance, Dominicus de Gubernatis, whose tract "De Missionibus Apostolicis in Communi" was prefaced to a history of Franciscan missionaries. This last tract appeared after Brancati's work, in 1689.

Brancati was a theologian of some dimensions. He taught at the Sapienza and was Prefect of Studies at the Urban College of the Propaganda. He was connected with numerous congregations, was esteemed by five Popes from Innocent X to Innocent XI, and himself missed the papacy only by a Spanish veto. He was made a Cardinal by Blessed Innocent XI whose avowed determination it was to confer the red hat only upon worthy subjects. Brancati's connection with the Urban College of the Propaganda and the fact that his work was published by the Propaganda and with its approval (when mission publications were severely curtailed) is a proof that it expressed a semi-official opinion. It was in fact written for the formation of the numerous seminarians who were gathered from all over the mission world to study at the College of the Propaganda.

Father Hoffman has rescued Brancati's work from relative obscurity. Even so well informed an authority as Streit fails to mention it in his *BIBLIOTHECA MISSIONUM*. This obscurity is explained mainly by two facts: first, the work was published as an appendix to Brancati's treatise on the Act of Faith, an unusual place to look for a discussion of the missions; secondly, it came out when mission interest was on the decline, due to Rome's preoccupation with the Rites and other controversies. Father Pierre Charles, S.J., the Belgian missiologist, is the only modern scholar to give it much space.

Father Hoffman establishes Brancati as a real pioneer in missiology, and, with José de Acosta, the foremost of the period. Acosta was more practical and wrote for the missions of South America; Brancati was more theoretical and wrote for missions in general. Father Hoffman successfully defends Brancati against certain stric-

tures of Father Charles. He also shows that Thomas a Jesu's patchwork of quotations on the missions is greatly overrated and cannot compare with Brancati as a scientific treatise on missiology. As for Gubernatis, he has borrowed so heavily from Brancati that to compare him with Brancati is to compare Brancati with himself.

Brancati, being close to the Propaganda at the time when this Congregation was striving to wrest control of the missions from the Catholic powers, stresses the power of the Pope in the missions. As a result he fails to give sufficient importance to the obligations of other clergy and the faithful in general. He also held with his contemporaries in general that the purpose of the missions is conversion to the faith, and says nothing of the purpose now generally assigned by missiologists: the founding of the Church.

Father Hoffman has gone to the originals and read them carefully and as a result has been able to differ convincingly with previously held opinion on three of these men. Mission theory has come a long way since Cardinal Brancati, but he justly deserves to be styled a pioneer in this discipline. Father Hoffman has given us an interesting study of this holy and learned Franciscan Cardinal.

LEO A. CULLUM

LIFE IN CHRIST

CHRIST IN US. Instructions in the Catholic Faith. By James Kilgallon and Gerard Weber. Canterbury Books VII. London-New York: Sheed and Ward, 1959. 302 pp. \$1.00 (Paperback)

CHRIST IN US, a compendium of Christian doctrine for adults written by two priests of the Chicago archdiocese, was first issued in the summer of 1958. Now the "Chicago catechism" makes its appearance as a double volume in Sheed and Ward's Canterbury Books. It comes to Manila bookstands with every recommendation: it has been hailed as the best thing in its field. Perhaps the enormous sale it has enjoyed in its two years of existence is the best witness to its excellence and usefulness. It certainly fills a need.

The title of the American edition best describes the catechism's central theme: *Life in Christ*. The different truths of the Faith and the various elements of Catholic life are presented in their organic relationship with the Person of Jesus Christ and the divine life He came to communicate to men. "This was the way," Father John LaFarge reminds us in a special review he wrote for this