

BOOKS RECEIVED

- A New Catechism: Catholic Faith for Adults.** Trans. Kevin Smyth; New York: Herder and Herder, 1967. Pp. xviii-510. Cloth, \$6.00.
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COVER AND ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

The cover photo depicts the Alkaba, inside the Mosque "Alharm Almaky," in Mecca, the Holy City of Islam toward which every Muslim should face as he turns to God in prayer five times each day. At lower left is the "Zamzam," a sacred well renowned for the medicinal powers of its waters. This photograph and the two accompanying the article, "Christian Witness to Islam," are used by courtesy of the Saudi-Arabian Public Relations Bureau, New York. The remaining illustrations for this month's issue were drawn by Father Francis X. Miles, O.F.M., of St. Bonaventure University's theology department.

the CORD

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Is God a Problem?



Among its Fall publications, the Paulist Press offers two welcome contributions to the growing body of literature attempting to cope with modern man's stance before God.¹

The author of the first is a young theologian, ordained last year, with a fine talent for getting into the other man's perspective. In *The Death of God Movement* Father Charles N. Bent, S.J., "gets into" the thought of Vahanian, Hamilton, van Buren, and Altizer with some very valuable results.

Father Bent analyzes sympathetically and, for the most part, competently the thought of each of these theologians, reserving for the end of each chapter his evaluative conclusions and synthesizing these latter in a brief epilogue. The style leaves something to be desired, in that it is repetitious and needlessly complicated by the technique of referring to an earlier thinker by paraphrasing the later thinker's reaction. This technique gives rise, often, to a "Van Buren says that Bultmann says that Heidegger says" sort of exposition — not too easy to follow. Not all this could have been avoided, but especially where sources are common to two or more of the main authors considered, it might have helped to devote a preliminary section to Father Bent's own presentation of those earlier sources. The author is also to some extent hindered by the same sort of fragmentary approach that Hamilton so enthusiastically embraces, and this seems to be a defect in a systematic study like this one.

One wonders how Father Bent could possibly have failed to mention Thomas Ogletree's *The Death of God Controversy* (on Hamilton, Altizer, and van Buren), in some ways a better book than his own though not as detailed in certain areas. Equally difficult to explain is his omission of any consideration of Hamilton's *The New Essence of Christianity*, certainly a major source for the radical theologian's ideas. He takes the verification principle too seriously, in his study of van Buren, and never actually points out how absurd it is; nor does he accord due weight to the more important falsification principle in his treatment of linguistic analysis. In the same connection, he seems to give the erroneous impression that logical positivism

¹ *The Death of God Movement*. By Charles N. Bent, S.J. Glen Rock, N.J.: The Paulist Press, 1967. Pp. viii-213. Cloth, \$4.95.

Man in Search of God. By James J. Kavanaugh. Glen Rock, N.J.: Paulist Deuss Books, 1967. Pp. 109. Paper, \$1.25.

is still an influential philosophical school. One wishes, finally, that someone — author or publisher — had done something about the more obvious misprints: the omission of a "no" on p. 143 (which of course reverses the meaning), and the misspelling of the names of Antony Flew and G. W. F. Hegel and, occasionally, of Friedrich Nietzsche.

These mechanical flaws aside, the book is a fine and important piece of work. The author's thesis is well established: "In itself . . . Christian atheism does not afford a viable mode of belief for either the secular humanist or the Christian theist" (p. 205). Yet it would be a serious mistake simply to leaf through the book and concentrate on Father Bent's evaluations. They are good, but they are the conclusions of one author and as such do not suffice for the serious reader or student who must grapple with these radical ideas for himself and reach his own evaluations. The real value of the book lies more in the extensive quotations than in the brief conclusions. We certainly cannot deal here with the many issues involved, but we can heartily recommend a careful reading of this book with the hope that it will send the reader to the sources for an in-context presentation of the ideas in question.

In one sense, Father Bent leaves the reader with no real conclusion at all — i.e., no choice between secular humanism and Christian theism. All he has set out to show is that Christian atheism affords no real alternative to either of these choices. Father James J. Kavanaugh, in his excellent paperback, *Man in Search of God*, addresses himself more directly to the more fundamental choice between secular humanism and genuine Christian theism. He has produced a sprightly book replete with concrete examples and references, to the extent that the first part seems almost to be over-written. Seven chapters show contemporary man in search of his own identity, of unity, of dignity and love. We think Father Kavanaugh has presented an authentic picture of that elusive being, "contemporary man." Reading his fine characterization we conclude that, whereas Bonhoeffer, Cox, and the death-of-God theologians should have taken a longer look before deciding that man has fully "come of age," authors like Father Joseph Owens are equally quixotic in expecting modern man to embrace enthusiastically such metaphysical notions as the "act of being" as the center of their human existence.

Man in Search of God traces deftly the historical process of transition from the older, secure Christian existence to the new age in which traditions are questioned and often found wanting. The author has some attractive answers which are not new in their substance but are presented in a very appealing way. The value of this book, which should be a best-seller, is enhanced by the illustrations, reproduced from the originals in the Mu-

seum of Modern Art, and the thought-provoking discussion questions at the end of each chapter.

It is not really God, in the final analysis, that presents a problem; it is modern man and the world he has created. Pope John's vision "called for another look at modern man and a renewal of the kind of Christianity that tried to speak to him." This vision, Father Kavanaugh points out, "takes courage and patience. It calls for experiments that can help the lonely man of space to know that God is truly his Father. It tells the Christian community either to be truly a community of love or prepare for its own death" (p. 100).

"Most of all, Christians themselves must speak and listen to modern man in love. They must join him in the search, not as if they possessed all, but open to Christ in whatever form he takes. All of us are modern man in search, and God is not far from any one of us, because 'in him we live, and move, and have our being' (Acts 17, 28)" (p. 109).

Fr. Michael D. Meilach, OFM

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MONTHLY CONFERENCE

Man: the Personal Mediator

Alexander Rohr, O. F. M.

If you, a baptized Christian, were to enter a church and make a simple genuflection before the Blessed Sacrament, and right after you an unbaptized person were to imitate your action faithfully, what would be the "ontological" significance of these two actions in the eyes of God? We would have to say that although the latter act is certainly pleasing to God, that of the man who has been incorporated into Christ takes on a deep significance as an act of religious worship insofar as it is a sharing in the perfect act of homage that is Christ. The genuflection of a Christian is, as it were, Christ himself bowing down again before his Father—it is Christ's perfect and eternal act of worship extended anew into time and space.

We, the Christian People, have been made through baptism into an entire kingdom of priests:

By the sacrament of baptism under a general title Christians are made members of Christ the Priest, and by the character which is as it were engraved on their souls, they are deputed to divine worship; and thus they participate according to their

condition in the priesthood of Christ himself.¹

As a result of Christ's generous sharing of his role as the High Priest of the New Testament, we the Christian People are all able to offer true and pleasing worship to our Father. No other people has ever had this possibility or privilege. Even the Israelites had to look to the tribe of Levi to carry out their priestly functions, and these were only a foreshadowing of the true and singular priesthood of Christ. The ordinary Israelite was actually incapable of offering priestly worship to God of his own accord.

The sad commentary on the Christian centuries is that this tremendous gift of Christ to his people has not been stressed or fully understood by the faithful. We have not seen our relationship to God in the full context of the virtue of religion or the sacerdotal character of baptism and confirmation. Christianity has at times been seen as a sterile code of do's and don'ts with no really living relationship to God. As a result of this perversion, the moral life of

¹ Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*, §110.

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many Christians has almost been a mere humanism or natural ethic. The categorical imperative of Immanuel Kant stands as an extreme example of how far morality has sometimes become divorced from our relationship to God.

The Incarnation has made true religious morality possible. Because of Christ's redemption, morality can no longer validly be separated from religion nor from Christianity itself. In and through Christ true religion is made possible and morality becomes meaningful. Outside of Christ man is incapable of offering satisfactory homage to God; outside of Christ morality becomes mere human idealism with very limited religious significance.

Fortunately we are deepening our sense of priesthood today. One author says that "the Church of the future is going to be built on the fact that lay people are truly priests."² To many this sounds like a true but rather theoretical doctrine which really can't affect Christianity that much. Worship is considered the function of the priest or religious as such. If we allow this attitude to continue, we are actually fostering the continual divorce of religion from Christianity.

I do not intend here to re-present the basic doctrine of religion and priesthood, but I will attempt to point out some of the practical ramifications of this doctrine for our own lives. No goal, certainly, is more crucial for contemporary Christian life than a perceptive re-

integration of Christianity and religion!

The Meaning of Man

Perhaps we can look upon the original creation of man as God's attempt to raise up a unique and personal mediator between creation and himself—one who could, as it were, freely and continually return to God the glorious reflections of Him that he finds in creation. Man was made to recognize, joyfully acknowledge, and re-present to God by free offering the glory that he finds in creation. In this very function man is to find his happiness and fulfillment; in this relationship man discovers his place within the community of mankind.

This interpretation of human existence is so simple (and yet so tremendous) that we usually overlook it while foolishly searching for some "deeper" meaning to life. It took an "idiot" like Saint Francis to recall mankind to an awareness of this original plan of creation.

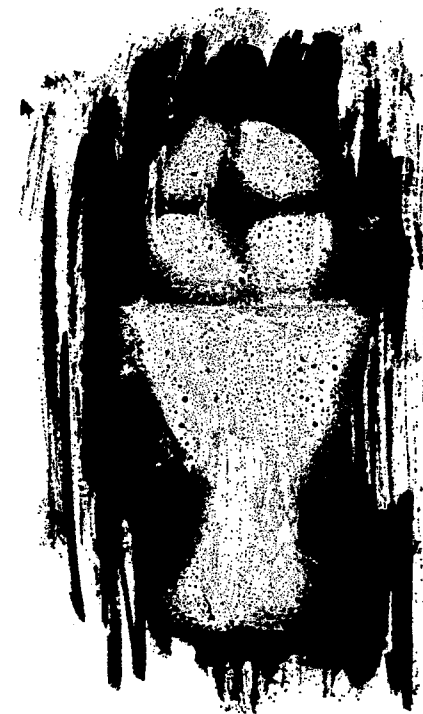
Unfortunately, our father Adam rejected this priestly task and vocation through sin. But this did not thwart the steadfast love of God for his people: Christ, the Firstborn Son and the King of all creation, became in fact the redeeming Christ and the Saviour of his Kingdom. What was lost for us through Adam was abundantly restored to us through Christ! Through incorporation into Christ in baptism we regain our lost priesthood and the original meaning of our existence.

² Christopher Kiesling, O.P., *The Spirit and Practice of the Liturgy* (Chicago: Priory Press, 1965), 59.

Thus we speak of baptism as the new creation, or as a rebirth in Christ. Henceforth our greatest privilege and deepest possibility is to offer fitting worship to God our Father. As sons of God we have been given the means to worship him—God gives us the love by which we are able to love him. Through baptism he makes it possible for us to realize the deepest significance of our creatureliness; he makes it possible for us to know, love, and serve him.

The familiarity of this last phrase, which we know so well from the catechism, should not obscure its profound meaning. Note, e.g., how well its elements are illustrated by the theological virtues. Faith enables our minds to know God, hope empowers our will to serve God, and love is of course the affective power to embrace God as our perfect Good. The three theological virtues thus give us the power to carry out the three essential reasons for our human existence; and in this we see the perfect order that has been restored to creation through the coming of Christ and his redemptive act. For men of faith, it becomes apparent that man is made for grace; it is not something superadded to his real nature. Man was made to share God's life and thereby to reflect his glory back to him in the form of worship, praise, and interior acts of homage. And this is all we mean by priesthood.

But this priesthood is possible only through baptismal incorporation into Christ; so we can take one more step and say that man is



made for Christ. Only in Christianity does true religion become possible and only through Christ are we able to please our Father and fulfill the deepest meaning of our existence. Christianity and religion are one, and they are totally accommodated to the nature of man in the sacramental character of Christian priesthood.

Religion and Christian Morality

It is primarily through the liturgy that Christianity develops this basic relationship given in baptism. The liturgy impresses Christ's likeness ever more perfectly upon the Christian and upon the whole People of God. It does

this by bringing the baptismal character to a living, dynamic perfection. Life for the Christian must therefore become a "living liturgy"—a living sacrifice to God. In other words, the genuine exercise of religious worship is the surest road to Christian behavior or morality. In fact, morality becomes rather shallow outside of this love relationship established in worship.

Our religious worship, on the other hand, has no real authenticity about it if our subsequent behavior does not reflect the filial relationship that was effected and expressed in worship; thus Häring speaks of sin as basically impiety or a refusal of filial obedience.³ In either case the error proceeds from the separation of religion from morality.

The effective sign of this union of religion and morality can be found only in the Christian liturgy wherein the religious relationship is both expressed and further developed. The liturgy is also an obligation sign to live out what you have expressed and experienced in formal worship. So in effect we can carry our "logical formula" one step further and say that man is made for the Christian liturgy wherein he can most fully practice his character of priesthood.

The Universal Scope of Liturgy

The term *liturgy* does not refer simply to the Mass, but in general

³ Bernard Häring, C.Ss.R., *The Law of Christ I* (Westminster: Newman Press, 1961), 346.

⁴ Colman O'Neill, *Meeting Christ in the Sacraments* (New York: Alba House, 1964), 114.

to all those external and sacramental rites whereby we unite with Christ in offering priestly worship to the Father. There is no phase or sphere of Christian life that cannot be made a true act of religious worship. By reason of our inherent priestly character we are capable of bringing all things into the category of worshipful praise. What was visible in the life of Christ has now passed over into sacraments through which we can share in Christ's religious attitude. The sacraments real-ize in man that sanctity which is the fruit of liturgical worship, and yet like the Mass they are acts of worship in themselves. This is the wonder of God's plan of redemption: he saves us through the very actions whereby we worship him.

All the sacraments are essentially related to the virtue of religion, but here it will suffice to say something of the priestly character given through baptism, confirmation, and Orders. Saint Thomas makes no distinction between the three characters except in degree; he says that those who bear these characters serve God as ministers, they are his instruments.⁴ Thomas corrects a common misunderstanding which considers the character as a grace given or received by pointing out that "the character disposes the soul directly and immediately for performing those actions which belong to divine worship."⁵ Through these sacraments

we enter into a progressively deeper sharing in the priesthood of Christ. The confirmed and the ordained not only share in the ontological priesthood of baptism but they are further empowered to direct the saving action of Christ's priesthood toward others.⁶ This is the very practical significance of confirmation for the unordained Christian. By this sacrament he not merely receives from Christ as in baptism but he is able to give to the members of Christ as a mediator of Christ's priesthood. It is by virtue of confirmation that the Christian is enabled to publicly and socially participate in the worship of the Father. For this reason we speak of confirmation as the sacrament of Christian adulthood or Christian maturity. In confirmation we become capable of mature and adult worship of God or, as one author points out, we are further empowered to manifest "our faith by external signs."⁷

Ritual and Spiritual Priesthood

It is important to remember that Christ's priesthood has two faces or aspects: the external aspect, the outward sign, the ritual action; and the internal aspect, which is the basic religious attitude of adoration, submission, and sacrifice. For man both aspects are necessary. Interior attitudes cannot continue to exist without external ex-

pression, and external action without interior attitude is what we call formalism or ritualism. These two aspects of priesthood were perfectly united only once in history—in the Passion and Death of Christ. It is through participating in this eternal priesthood of the God-man that Christianity considers herself capable of offering fitting sacrifice and worship to God the Father.

The *spiritual priesthood* is actively present in every Christian who is living by the life that was given him in baptism. By this priesthood he is "one with Jesus as religious mediator between God and sinful mankind."⁸ So Saint Peter tells us, "Set yourselves close to him so that you too, the holy priesthood that offers the spiritual sacrifices which Jesus Christ has made acceptable to God, may be living stones making a spiritual house" (1 Pet. 2:5).

Spiritual priesthood embraces the entire Christian life just as did the priestly attitude of Christ even before the "ritual action" of the cross. Spiritual priesthood "consists in the very image of Christ wrought in the Christian."⁹ Spiritual priesthood precedes and is the basis for ritual priesthood. Spiritual priesthood is eternal and will continue to exist in heaven. Spiritual priesthood and worship are the very substance of all Christian existence. And this priesthood can be pos-

⁵ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁶ Clifford Howell, S.J., *Of Sacraments and Sacrifice* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1952), 50-51.

⁷ O'Neill, 113.

⁸ Kiesling, 65.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 67.

sessed and exercised just as much by a confirmed Christian as it can by an ordained priest.

Ritual priesthood can, of course, be possessed only by the ordained minister. The ritual priesthood is meant to bring the spiritual priesthood into existence in the Body of the Church. Ritual priesthood will cease at the end of time. Without denying that the union of ritual and spiritual priesthood is the perfection of human and Christian priesthood, we can still say that spiritual priesthood is the authentic and eternal priesthood of Christ. And this priesthood is shared in by everyone who is baptized.

The Religious and the Priest

By his very name the person who binds himself by vow to the fullness of the Christian life is known as one who fully commits himself to his obligations of religion or priesthood:

The religious, as the most vibrant expression of the Church, has to live all this in a supremely perfect way, so that in him the Church will be strikingly manifest for what she truly is—the fullness of Christ's sacrifice, a living holocaust to the glory of God. Religious life is the fullest activation of the baptismal character, and the proper living of it is the fullest possible participation in the liturgy, and the whole manner of life is a visible expression of the inner holocaust offered with Christ. As visible expression of an inner sacrifice, the manner of life of a religious

can be called 'liturgy' by analogy.¹⁰

Thus Solemn Profession is sometimes spoken of as "second baptism," and out of this basically valid framework developed the customs of giving a new name, new garb, and a totally new way of life. This was not to understress the commitment of baptism (although this may have been its effect at times), but to reaffirm and express visibly the sacrament's "first conversion." The Divine Office is probably the primary expression of this attempt to live a life wholly devoted to the worship of God—the "sacrifice of praise" is to be the priestly offering that envelops our whole day's activity. Even today although much of this thinking is receiving new and different emphasis, the basic understanding is still valid. In short, we have bound ourselves to the full expression of the religious relationship. The Church teaches that to make a vow is an act of the virtue of religion and the three vows bind us entirely to this relationship. Our life, if it is authentic and true to itself, must have as its basic disposition the carrying out of the religious relationship, the sharing in Christ's priestly work. Even our many and varied works of the apostolate cannot be considered as ends in themselves; for the religious they must become genuine acts of worship. As religious we live primarily "unto God" and if this inner priesthood is lost, we become just as meaningless and ritualistic

as does the ordained priest who goes through the motions without the inner dispositions.

The man ordained to the priesthood becomes an effective mediator between God and his creation; he becomes the official worshipper in the community who, as the instrument of Christ, offers the sacrifices and prayers of the people to the Father. As such he is called to bring all things into the sphere of worship and praise of God. By his official sharing in the priesthood of Christ all his priestly activity should have a particular religious significance.

If such is the position of an ordained priest, what is the added significance of a religious who is a priest? Perhaps we could say that if religion is the "occupation" of the priest, then it must be the "pre-occupation" of the religious priest. The religious priest is in every sense totally committed to the exercise of the virtue of religion—not only in his whole way of life but also in relation to the People of God for whom he exercises the priesthood. The religious priest exemplifies the most all-inclusive call of God to personal mediation between God and his creation.

Conclusion

If we wished to sum up in one phrase the total mission of Christ and of his Church and of all the apostolic labors of all the priests, religious, and laymen in the world, we would have to say that it is all

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Dominic M. Hoffman, O.P.

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directed to one supreme end: to draw all men to the true worship of God "in spirit and in truth."¹¹

We seldom think of Christianity in such a simple context; yet basically this is the meaning of all the rites, teachings, and activity of the Church. Christ came to restore creation to the Creator—to the role that was rejected by Adam's sin—and it is to this simple yet supreme end that all Christian life tends. In and through the priesthood of Christ we can restore all things to their proper order, we can re-orient all creation back to its God. This is our vocation as human persons. This is the only meaning of religion.

¹⁰ Paul Hinnebusch, O.P., *Religious Life: a Living Liturgy* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965), 9-10.

¹¹ Second Vatican Council, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, §10.

Christian Witness to Islam

Giulio Basetti-Sani, O. F. M.

In 1932 a group of Parisian Catholics asked that a novena of Masses be said from May 31 to June 8 at the Franciscan shrine of Mount Alvernia, where Saint Francis had received his Stigmata. None of the priests who celebrated those Masses, I am sure, could have understood then the special significance of the novena. The spokesman of the group, Professor Louis Massignon, had requested it to mark prayerfully at Alvernia the thirteenth "solar" centenary of the death at Medina of the Arab Prophet Muhammad.

That was the only Christian celebration of Muhammad's death centenary. Why should it have taken place? How are Francis of Assisi and Mount Alvernia related to the founder of the religion of Islām?

Louis Massignon

Louis Massignon, as a young French orientalist who lost his Catholic faith, was felled by God's grace while in the desert of Kerbela and Nejf, in Iraq (at that time Mesopotamia) in 1908. In a remote land, he confessed, God had by a mysterious intervention illuminated his soul and taken him back "by sheer force into the Church." So he offered his life in prayer, fasting, and fraternal love to carry Christ's message to his muslim brothers, asking God to make him

an instrument of his divine Providence.

For more than fifty years Massignon pursued scientific research in Islamic theology and mysticism, and his labor helped providentially and tremendously toward the future improvement of Christian-Muslim relations. Massignon set before the Christian world one of the greatest examples of holiness to appear among the followers of Muhammad: Hessein Mansūr al-Hallāj. This muslim mystic (sufi), born at Fars, Iran, in 857, seemed a witness of the love of Jesus Christ among the Muslims. Because of this love of God in imitation of Jesus Christ as known through the Qur'ān and the muslim tradition, Hallāj was condemned to die crucified "like Jesus," after a long trial as a heretic; he was rejected and cursed by the islamic authorities of Baghdad. Offering his blood for the salvation of his muslim brothers, he said: "God has allowed the shedding of my blood to become legal. Kill me . . . there is no duty more urgent for Muslims than my death sentence. It is in the religion of the Cross that I shall die . . . proceed, then, to slay this 'cursed person' that is me." Hussein Ibn Mansūr al-Hallāj died after three days on the cross in the year 922. Pious Muslims imputed the destruction of Baghdad in 946 to divine punishment for the

killing of Hallāj, just as pious Jews had imputed the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 to the "visitation of God" because of the crucifixion of Jesus. Through his study of Hallāj's writings, Massignon learned the inner meaning of the Qur'ān; and Hallāj became like a spiritual guide to him. Following his example, he offered himself as a hostage for Islām in the camp of the Christians. In the midst of his "muslim brothers," he made himself a mediator of peace for the reconciliation of all the sons of Abraham: Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

During his prolonged stay in Cairo in 1912-1913 as a university professor, Massignon took lessons in Catholic theology from a French Franciscan, Father Pierre Alcantara, and joined the Third Order. His life from that time on was organized around the Franciscan program: "Peace and goodness!" This program for reconciliation in human relations, for justice toward the oppressed and persecuted, Massignon carried forward in his career as a university professor, as an explorer, and through his missions as military and diplomatic envoy.

What Hallāj did by his expiatory suffering for the salvation of Islām, in the midst of the Muslim community, offering himself to God in "substitution" for whatever might be lacking in Islām, Francis of Assisi did for the salvation of his muslim brothers, in the Church.

This idea of suffering in union with the mystery of the Cross attracted Massignon's special attention; he found clearly expressed in the life of Saint Francis, particularly in the visit of Saint Francis to Sultan Malek el Kamal at Damietta (1219) and in the Saint's stigmatization on Mount Alvernia. Small wonder, then, that it was to Alvernia that he went with his fellow-pilgrims to commemorate the thirteenth centenary of Muhammad's death.

It was in October of 1936 that I first met Professor Massignon, in Paris. I had just spent a year in Egypt, working as a missionary in Cairo where I had experienced my first confrontation with the muslim world. Sent to Paris for further training in my Eastern apostolate, I came to Massignon for advice concerning the studies I was undertaking. That meeting so long ago is still fresh in my memory; it began a friendship that he sustained up to the eve of his death (the last letter I received from him was dated July, 1962).

I can still see his expression of joy when he first heard that I was born in Florence and was a member of the Franciscan province of Alvernia. Florence was his favorite Italian city. At the mention of Alvernia he began to talk of many things that seemed to me unrelated: Alvernia, Saint Francis at Damietta, Muhammad, Medina, etc. It was very difficult, not to say im-

Father Giulio Basetti-Sani, O.F.M., is a distinguished oriental scholar now engaged in research at St. Bonaventure University.

possible, for me at that moment to discern any relationship between the Arab Prophet Muhammad (whom I then saw only as he had always been depicted to me) and Alvernia— and Saint Francis' Stigmata, upon which I had reflected long and deeply.

Massignon was insistent in his exhortation that I meditate on the hidden connection between Francis' experience in Egypt and at Alvernia; for these linked my seraphic Father with Muhammad. He reminded me that I was actively involved in one of the explicit vocations of my Order, one expounded by Saint Francis in the twelfth

chapter of our Rule, concerning those who "go among the Saracens."

The things Massignon said to me seemed so strange and outlandish that I grasped very little of what he had to say. I do recall a vague impression that perhaps such talk about Saint Francis, Damietta, and Alvernia could be interesting, even though in my ten years of Franciscan life I had never heard or read any mention of the theme. The venerable professor had sown fertile seeds in my heart that evening; I came away convinced that I had met a saint.

Ten years later the seeds began to germinate. In 1946 I enjoyed an-

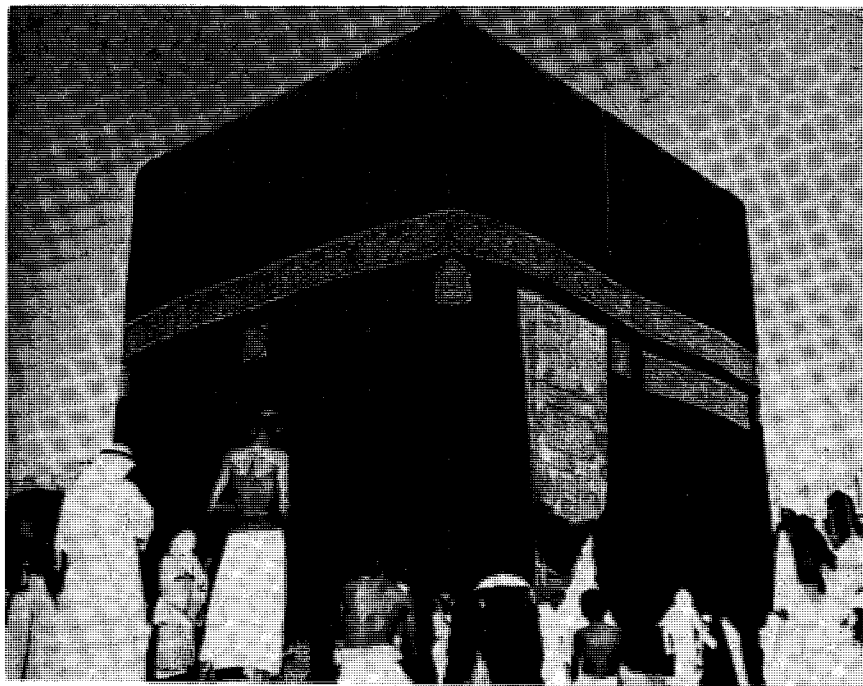
other intimate talk with Professor Massignon, this time in Cairo. He spoke words of guidance that imposed on my mind the need for a whole new orientation toward Islām. For years I had pondered the problem of Muhammad's personality and achievements in relation to world history. The age-old solution offered by Christian apologetics, I had long accepted as convincing. I had even added to it by my own researches. I had enriched it with proofs from comparative analysis of the Qur'ān and Islamic history. I was still convinced that Muhammad was the "Prophet of Satan," and that Islām was the religion of Satan.

Although this persuasion of mine seemed to offer satisfaction to my own mind, my daily contacts with so many Muslims and my continuous discovery of genuine religious spirit among muslim believers (especially among "praying people"), jostled that conclusion. During this meeting in 1946 I revealed both my ideas and my doubts to my teacher Massignon, whom I revered as both a saint and a great scholar in Islamism.. He quickly repressed his initial impulse— he had started in apparent indignation and cried out, "No, no!"— then he smiled and said to me with what can only be described as profound tenderness: "There is a phrase of Saint John of the Cross which can serve as a starting point: 'Whenever you do not find love in something, bring love into it, and soon you will discover Love.' You should have brought love to your understand-

ing of the Qur'ān; you should have put love into your consideration of the person of Muhammad." He suggested I read and meditate on the Qur'ān with more Christian charity, with a feeling of respect for the divine secrets and mysteries, and so try to discover the providential place assigned by God to Islām in the plan of human history. He also called my attention once more to the mysterious rapport between Muhammad and Saint Francis. He pointed out the possible providential significance of Francis' visit to Damietta and of his Stigmata, if considered sympathetically in the context of Church history. Massignon insisted again that I had a duty to rediscover for my confreres, especially for those who were working in the muslim lands, the special vocation that a true Franciscan had to minister to his muslim brothers.

My investigations and reflections along the lines suggested by Massignon, as well as by his writings, led me to view the mystery of Islām as part of the universal plan of human history which is oriented toward Christ, hinged upon the Word made flesh. I saw Francis anew, as a God-sent Prophet destined to call the Church to a fresh and more evangelical attitude toward the muslim people.

Today, in the Christian world newly illuminated by the Vatican Council, we are summoned to a dialogue with the non-christian religions, and particularly with the muslim believers. Saint Francis left us, and all Christians, an unparal-



A close-up view of the Alkaba (see front cover), the sacred shrine of Islam in Mecca.

leed example of love for God and man, that we too might learn and realize a special, uniquely fruitful way to communication and understanding.

For the first time, in the conciliar documents on the Church and on non-christian religions, Islām is considered as a religion and as related to Abraham, the father of all believers. This fact, I consider extremely important.

During the thirteen centuries since the birth of Islām, christian-muslim relations were unfortunately—as the Council admitted—not always correct. But God sent Francis to his Church at a time when Islām's presence at the frontiers of Christendom seemed to require destruction by military force. As many Christians are persuaded today that communism has to be stopped by war and destruction, by hatred in the name of the gospel and christian civilization, so also in Francis' day many bishops, clergy, and christians, neglecting the significance of Christ's teaching, thought that "because Islām was born with the sword and was spread by the sword, Christians must destroy it by the sword." The Crusades were considered the solution.

Such a solution could, perhaps, be justified in the name of a human wisdom. The "Vi vim repellere licet" (Force may be used to stop force") has, however, been made obsolete by the mystery of the Cross. Christians, at least, should see themselves called to apply to the human situation the commands

of Christ: "I say to you, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who persecute and calumniate you" (Mt. 5: 44); and of Saint Paul: "To no man render evil for evil, but provide good things not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of all men. If thy enemy is hungry, give him food; if he is thirsty, give him drink . . . Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:17, 20, 21). Saint Francis reminded Christians by his example that any violence is incompatible with the authentic spirit of the gospel. Very often men of the Church are tempted to dilute this primacy of charity with so-called human wisdom ("prudentia huius saeculi"). At the time of Saint Francis the Muslims were considered by the Popes to be the enemies of the Cross of Christ; very few Christians were able to recognize in the face of a Muslim the image of Christ, or to consider a Muslim not only a human being, but a brother for whom Christ died, and whom we have the duty to love.

Francis was convinced, however, that it was by Jesus' passion and death, not by thunderbolts and the deployment of divine Justice, that God had brought about the salvation of men. Filled with the love of Christ, Francis discovered in Muslims not the terrible enemies against whom Christians were being exhorted to take up the sword, but foreign brothers who had to be led to their Father's house through meekness, kindness, and goodness. As Jesus had treated men with love

and saved them by giving himself on the Cross, the Church, his mystical Body, cannot follow any other course: she must treat Muslims with charity and understanding, and save them by prayer and suffering.

Francis' solution was, of course, deemed unrealistic, idealistic, out of touch with the practicalities of the day . . . No one could then recognize in him a messenger from God. Francis tried to persuade Honorius III to stop the fourth Crusade because it was against the will of God. The Curia did not give serious consideration to this suggestion, and so Francis decided to go himself to Egypt, to try to bring Christians and Muslims together for negotiations. The Sultan, Malak al Kamal, was ready to give back

Jerusalem to the Christians in exchange for the evacuation of the crusaders from Egypt. But in the mind of Cardinal Pelagio, the principal purpose of the Crusade was no more the reconquest of Christ's sepulchre and the Holy City, than the destruction of muslim power. . .

Saint Francis' behavior was, under God's inspiration, the strongest condemnation of the warlike spirit of the medieval crusade, undertaken in the name of the gospel (!). By word and example, Francis continues to ask Christians to substitute meekness for hatred, kindness for scorn. He continues to urge us, his followers, to foster and implement true love, the charity of Christ, and to let it lead us to offer ourselves as victims, making up for what is lacking in our brothers.

The "Mubalah" of Saint Francis at Damietta

Having landed in Egypt in July of 1219, Francis tried to persuade the papal delegate, Cardinal Pelagio, and the leaders of the Crusades, to negotiate. He was ready to go himself among the "Saracens." But his proposal was rejected by Pelagio; Francis then warned: "Do not fight, because the Crusaders will be defeated." His warning was ignored, and on August 31 the christian army was massacred.

Thus vindicated, Francis was later allowed to visit the muslim camp (it was the third time that he had resolved to go "among the Saracens," to preach the gospel to them and, perhaps, sacrifice his life for them). The sincerity with which he presented himself to the

Sultan to announce his mission as an envoy from God, could not but elicit and win sympathy and respect; for a frank, humble, and courageous affirmation of the christian faith, without offense to muslim conscience, is respectfully heard by a just and pious Muslim as was Malak al Kamal. According to the biographers it seems that the Sultan was personally aware of Francis' fervor and holiness; and Francis, on his part, had no word of contempt for Muhammad, nor for the Islamic religion, but only professed himself ready to remain among the Muslims for the love of Christ. He was, in fact, prepared to preclude their every hesitation by undergoing the ordeal of fire which

would have to show God's intervention on the side of the truer and holier faith.

Few, perhaps, realize that Francis' offer to testify to christian truth by an ordeal of fire actually constituted a kind of reparation for the refusal of some Arabic Christians who were asked by Muhammad himself to do just that. A Christian delegation led by a bishop had come from Najrān to Medina; and Muhammad had summoned them after a discussion on the Passion of Jesus, to prove the truth of the Incarnation, inviting them with him and his five companions (his daughter Fātima, his son-in-law Ali, Ali's sons Hussain and Hussan, and Salman Pack) to join in invoking the curse of God on those who were wrong, by means of the *mubāhala*, or ordeal of fire.

These Christians, as I said, did not accept the challenge, nor would they recognize Muhammad's prophetic mission. They did, however, declare themselves ready to negotiate a compromise: The faithful of the two Abrahamic monotheisms, Jews and Christians, should have the right to refuse to embrace Islām, by paying a tribute, and their lives, property, and entire communal autonomy would be guaranteed. In this first and solemn meeting of Islām and Christianity the latter incurred the responsibility in lacking courage to bear witness to the truth, in failing in charity through contempt for that non-baptized person (Muhammad) who pretended to be recognized as a messenger from God, while they themselves judged him excluded from the

privileged participation in the adoption of the sons of God. That pusillanimity, that pride of believing themselves the only privileged ones, scandalized Muhammad. Having retired to pray, he heard the desired answer remitted to the day of the Last Judgment: "Wait, wait, Muhammad!" And Islām still waits.

Saint Francis' action at Damietta, seen in direct relation to the above event at Medina, takes on a profound meaning which biographers have habitually failed to perceive. As Massignon pointed out, while it gives an estimation of the greatness of Francis' soul, it announces at the same time the new attitude which the Lord demands from Christians toward Islām: reparation through suffering which, in life and death, bears witness to the faith; christian charity which condemns no one, leaves the judgment of intentions to God, seeks to discover and recognize in all, even in the greatest sinners, the gifts of God, and incites the apostle to love the brother in whom he sees the image and likeness of Christ, even as far as immolating himself for his salvation and substituting himself for him before the Lord.

But in conformity with the rule of the Qur'ān, the Muslims refused the challenge. Francis then declared himself ready to enter the fire alone. Humbly he forewarned them that if the Lord did not assist him, they should attribute that to his sins and not consider it a divine condemnation of the christian faith. If, on the contrary, the power



Pilgrims camping on plains of "Muna" just outside Mecca. Pilgrimage is made annually.

of God should be miraculously manifested by protecting him from harm in the midst of the flames, he asked the Sultan and his people to hear the message of the gospel. But after the incident at Medina between Muhammad and the Christians of Najrān, the Muslims had been forbidden to accept any anticipation of the judgment which they felt God had reserved to himself, to give to angels and men in the presence of Jesus Christ. Taking into account these facets of the

muslim conscience we must revise our evaluation both of the Sultan's response and of the conduct of the muslim theologians (doctors of the Law). Their refusal did not signify contempt, either of Saint Francis, or of the Christian religion. On the contrary the Sultan, in conformity with his faith, publicly professed the divine origin of Christianity: "I believe that your Faith is good and true."

Francis' hope of converting the Muslims, or of sacrificing himself

THE FRANCISCAN'S CLIMB TO GOD

Henrique Golland Trindade,
O. F. M.

A readable treatise on Franciscan spirituality using the metaphor of the mountain-climber. The book covers such subjects as the strengthening of the will, the necessity of breaking with evil, the part played by work and reading, the enkindling of the love of God, daily mortifications, the Sacraments. Frontispiece. \$1.25.



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for them, was thus thwarted. But his love for them remained constant; realizing that God's hour had not yet arrived, that a long maturing of suffering and immolation impelled by the love of Christ would be necessary, he saw clearly that Islām is a mystery. Even more than before, his preoccupation with that mystery became one of the deepest aspects of his interior life; now more than ever Saint Francis offered himself to God in "substitution" for thousands of muslim souls. When he had returned to Italy he gave his friars his first Rule, a program far removed, indeed, from the mentality of his day in its attitude toward the Muslims. His program, actually, had two phases.

In the first phase, the gospel message is announced in the islamic lands by the practice of christian virtue. The friars who have chosen to go "among the Saracens" must not take action against their hosts, nor cause disputes, but must submit themselves to all, and therefore even to the Muslim, authorities. It is considered humanly impossible, even today, to live in the Orient without making such a disposition an essential part of one's whole missionary approach. After an assiduous practice had shown the primary values to be humility, poverty, and gentleness, the ground would be well prepared. It would be easier for Islām to accept and understand the humiliations and the sufferings of the Son of God.

The second phase, that of external manifestation and preaching, is determined by the free dispen-

sation of God; the hour for open action is to be determined by divine Mercy. The apostle must be ready to execute this second part of his mission: to announce the Word of God presupposes the finest sort of spiritual and intellectual preparation; the Lord is in no way bound to give to all messengers of his Word the gift of tongues. On the contrary, no one could pretend to proclaim the gospel to a people without first knowing that people's language and mentality. It is by being an Arab among the Arabs that the Christian will help to draw all to Christ.

If all this seems commonplace in our post-Vatican II era, it should be pointed out that no one before Saint Francis understood the apostolate among the Muslims in this way. It was the distinctive insight

The Miracle of Alvernia and Islam

There is a particularly striking connection between Francis' Stigmata and another important event in the religious experience of the Prophet Muhammad. The unique event which took place on Alvernia in September, 1224, is well known. Franciscan tradition has from the very beginning meditated on the mystery of the Stigmata. But it has confined itself to the consideration of what that mystery signified for the person of the Saint. I think that it has neglected the problem raised by the mysterious significance of the apparition of Jesus crucified under the aspect of a seraph. Francis himself, it seems, was none too clear on the meaning

of Francis that the testimony of blood realized in union with Jesus' sacrifice would be the supreme expression of our love for the Muslims. In fact the Saint affirmed explicitly in his Rule that it is precisely because the Muslims would inflict suffering and death upon us, that they must be considered as our dearest friends, whom we must love heartily.

This love burned in Francis' heart; the supreme immolation he had hoped to attain at Damietta in a martyrdom of blood, continued instead for the rest of his life. His ardent desire to suffer for his muslim brothers received Christ's seal of acceptance on Alvernia — hence the intimate connection I have referred to, above, between the stigmatization of Saint Francis and the mystery of Islām.

of this fact. All his biographers see in the event God's answer to that desire of martyrdom which had driven Francis on to offer himself in the land of Islām. Saint Bonaventure in particular perceived clearly the relation between the two events: the preaching at Damietta before the Sultan from whom he awaited martyrdom, and the stigmatization on Alvernia.

But here the intuitions of Professor Massignon deserve to be taken into consideration. The offering of self made by the Saint at Damietta for the salvation of the Muslims, had been accepted by the Lord; but the martyrdom which he desired to undergo in the land of

Islām had to receive a new and deeper meaning. Whereas it was Francis' desire to make reparation by his courage and charity for the refusal by the Christian of Najrām to Muhammad, the Lord had reserved for him a more extraordinary martyrdom on Alvernia. It was especially in the person of Saint Francis that the Lord willed to satisfy Muhammad's sincere and ardent desire to see God manifestly in the form of an angel.

The miraculous event of Alvernia, in fact, uniting in some way the angelic nature to the Crucifixion, appear precisely as a supernatural compensation for what was wanting in the religious experience of Muhammad. For the first time in the history of Christianity, after the Ascension, Jesus Christ appeared on the earth in the figure of a seraph crucified; he thus brought the light of Sinai and Tabor to Alvernia. Why has this momentous event not, until now, sufficiently impressed Christian theology and life? Why did Jesus not appear to Francis in a poor, hidden cell, but rather on a high mountain in a scene of blazing light so redolent of Sinai and Tabor? Why did Jesus appear in the form of a crucified seraph?

This great Christophany of Alvernia, by which Francis received the desired martyrdom for the salvation of his brothers in Islām, makes visible the reality of Christ's crucifixion in the members of Francis' body. We know that officially muslim faith does not accept the reality of Jesus' death, nor his resurrection. For Islām, Jesus

Christ, the Holy One of God, could not suffer in such an ignominious manner; the "Judge" could not submit to a condemnation inflicted by men because that would be a defeat inflicted upon God. To this protestation of earthly wisdom, scandalized by the folly of the Cross—the death of God's Son—Saint Francis, by his love in offering himself for the Muslims, obtained the answer on Alvernia with the mysterious apparition of Jesus crucified in the form of a seraph and with the visible sign of crucifixion in his body.

Muhammad, in a "nocturnal ascension" or ecstasy to which the Qur'an twice alludes, was transported from Mecca, first onto the esplanade of the Temple of the destroyed Jerusalem, then from there to the inaccessible Holy City, the heavenly Jerusalem where the Glory of God resides. He reached beyond the "supreme horizon" up to the "Lotus of delay" close to the "garden of eternal sojourn," while a host of angels covered the tree (Sura 53:14-16). Behind that mystical tree at an interval of two bowshots God was hidden. Muhammad then desired, and attempted, to see God in his mystery; but his angelic guide (observes Massignon) was unable to introduce him into the embracing union, for the completely spiritual nature of his angelic guide did not normally represent the type in intimate union with God which is only possible through the crucified humanity of Christ.

God remained hidden to Muhammad, who then asked and desired

to see God in the figure of an angel: "Why could he not appear to me in the figure of an angel?"

Ignorant of the true meaning and purpose of the mystery of the Incarnation, Muhammad remained excluded from the divine union in the adoption of the "sons of God"; he never tried to enter into the flame of divine Life, thus renouncing the knowledge "ab intra" of the personal life of God, communicated to us through the only Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ. This desire to see God in the form of an angel remained without answer for centuries, but the answer came in the apparition, the great Christophany, of Alvernia, where Saint Francis was permitted, because of his love for the Muslims, to be the first to suffer as a new

crucified. Thus his prophetic mission within the Church for Islām, was in some way authenticated and consecrated: to this day Saint Francis, by his example and by his Stigmata, testifies to the genuinely evangelical attitude toward Islām and condemns by his own action the bellicose violence of the Crusaders. Through the five wounds imprinted on his body, Islām will be able one day to recognize the value of the five wounds of Jesus Christ, the only source of our Redemption.

The vocation of Saint Francis as "intercessor" for the muslim world was forever marked: to pray, suffer in "substitution," and love! After more than seven centuries that remains, today, the vocation of all sons of Saint Francis, wherever they are.

Meditation on Death

Mother Mary Francis, P. C. C.

Your eyes have split the atoms of my desires
Until my bones curve into cadences,
My blood swirls into songs.

Who shall penetrate my outer spaces,
Investigate the mystery of my being,
Tell me on what eternal holiday

Your Love traced out my avenues, hands made
Crannies and crooks for pain, hills for delight?
O spread, clear map of me on lap of God!

Now shall I praise You for the sheltering skull
Around my thoughts that tune my low Te Deum
When Your eyes split the atoms of my desires.

And Christ Shall Be All in All

Sister Mary Bernadette, P. C. C.

*The cosmic dust, the whirling aeons,
Sidereal galaxies and primal law,
A people and a Woman
Converge upon a Cup of Blood
In the hands of one crowned with unpurchasable power;
Spirit fallible, vessel frangible,
Summoned from the crowd yet offered because it was his own will:
Spokesman for the imperfect, ordained for Sacrifice and Healing.
Christ needs him for the intersection with the realm of time
From which His resurrection freed Him.*

*Not satisfied with safe and jewelled symmetry,
Requiring the ultimate, he must cast fire
In craft and thought and the deep searching of the spirit.
Embattled flames! Now earthward beaten, lost in smoke,
Now leaping, racing in the terrible cold.*

*Priest forever.
The here and now of speculation
Cannot be free of before and after:
The shadow's slow advance,
The rim where sea meets vaulted blue,
Twilight presaging the end.*

*When cosmic fibers meet in the Incarnate
And Creation travails no longer because
Its sap mingles with the King's Blood,
Christ shall complete Himself in love
With those who chose in space and duration.
The Priest shall have made of us an eternal gift
And Christ shall be all in all.*



Book Reviews

The Mass: Ancient Liturgies and Patristic Texts. By A. Hamman, O.F.M., Trans. Thomas Halton. New York: Alba House, 1967. Pp. 250. Cloth, \$4.95.

This newest book by the French Patristic scholar, A. Hamman, is divided into two main sections. The first is a presentation of pertinent liturgies dating from the early Christian Church, and the second is a compilation of selected eucharistic sermons from famous Fathers of the Church who had belonged to the various liturgical traditions recorded in the first part of the book. This latter section proves that the eucharistic teaching given by Vatican II and many modern theologians is nothing more than a re-echoing of a rich and ancient eucharistic tradition inherited from the ancient Church of both East and West.

Many of the patristic texts that were chosen, even in view of their definite relevance, seem unnecessarily long, tedious, and heavy for the average reader, so that some sort of scholarly abbreviation would have been in order in their regard.

In its presentation of certain Eastern liturgies, this book proves that today's liturgical movement in the Latin Church could learn from the ancient Eastern Church what it means to be relevant liturgically, while at the same time preserving its distinctive Roman characteristics without any kind of syncretism with Gallican or Eastern elements.

From a theological point of view, the contents of this book strikingly point out the inseparability of Christ's death and resurrection, demonstrating how the former is in casual relationship with the latter as a composite but unified event in the economy of salvation.

This book should be a richly rewarding source of background material for both the student and teacher

of Liturgy, for it is scholarly as well as spiritual. It can be read again and again because its many and rich layers of meaning will be penetrated only by perceptive and reflective thought.

— John-Francis Claro, O.F.M.

New Approaches to the Eucharist. By Colman E. O'Neill, O.P. Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1967. Pp. 1260. Cloth, \$4.95.

Father O'Neill enters the debate on the Eucharist putting forth as an absolute requirement the striving on the part of theologians for sympathetic understanding of each other's views. He maintains that the task of theology within the Church is to formulate a human understanding of the word of God. He sees the two parties engaged in the debate as united in a higher personality, that of the Church. And he sees the Church, by her teaching authority, not solving human dilemmas but drawing more firmly the lines of discussion.

Unfortunately, the author attempts to do just that: to solve human dilemmas. Although he admits that the problem of community vs. private mass is basically not doctrinal but psychological, still his discussion of the problem remains exclusively on the level of doctrine.

The book is well documented. The author draws from many sources as he treats of the presence of Christ and transubstantiation. He fears the new theories on the Eucharist for what he calls their "ontological inadequacy."

I found the author's exposition of Fr. Smits' theory on the Eucharist to be one of the highlights of the book. At times, the author shows an admirable sympathy towards views opposed to his own. Upon reading the first chapter I thought perhaps he was going to attempt to present objectively and sympathetically the

views of both sides of the debate on the Eucharist. I think such an undertaking would have been a greater service than a critique of the opposing side's views, a critique which runs the danger of speaking in categories which no longer hold meaning for the opposition.

I think the author set out to prove something: the ontological adequacy of the old approach. That is what causes me to have second thoughts about his approach to the new approach.

— Mathias Tumulty, O.F.M.

Eucharistic Theology. By Joseph M. Powers. New York: Herder and Herder, 1967. Pp. 192. Cloth, \$4.95.

This fine, concise and well-indexed book is extremely welcome at a time when so much pseudo-theology is coming out on the all-important subject of the Eucharist. It is a beautiful synthesis, consisting of four clearly delineated chapters: a historical conspectus, a biblical investigation, a metaphysical analysis, and a discussion of contemporary developments. There is no compromise with ambiguous formulations of the past as though these had to be revered for their own sake, but the author's thought is both thoroughly traditional and excitingly current.

Father Powers' background (bachelor's and master's degrees in philosophy, and a doctorate in theology from the Gregorian) thus contributes in an evident and very fortunate way to making his first book a genuine contribution to its field. His debt to European theologians (Rahner, Schillebeeckx, Schoonenberg, Hulsbosch, etc.) in no way minimizes the strength of his own clear and cogent presentation. I would attempt to convey some of the details here, if only the book were not so consistently insightful and competent; no doubt in this case the best course to take is simply to urge as strongly as possible that the reader, if he is in any way interested in the Eucharist, in the life

of the Church and of Christians, buy and study **Eucharistic Theology.**

— Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M.

The Christian Vision. By Donald J. Thorman. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967. Pp. 215. Cloth, \$4.50.

This second book by Mr. Thorman should have been subtitled, "A Handbook for Pre-conciliar Leaders." Many of the points he raises (and destroys moments later) already have been laid to rest ever since alert Christian writers and columnists have become attentive observers of a changing Catholic Church and ever since alert Christian leaders have begun listening to them. Yet **The Christian Vision** brings together under one cover and one theme (viz., that the new and the meaningful are replacing what believers thought central to their religion but were really ritualistic imitations of true commitment) insights we have come across in bits and pieces elsewhere; we are thankful to Mr. Thorman that this summarization task finally has been done.

There are several especially incisive chapters among the sixteen of his text which runs a bit over 200 pages. Although his style is somewhat choppy and contains awkward constructions, we can forgive these when reading, e.g., Chapter 3 on "Sanctity Today." In an attempt to find the saintly persons of our modern times, he discovers "many dedicated lay people active in the civic community to be among the most holy and spiritual persons we know. Their apostolic labors seem to have purified them as did the 'every manner of trial' faced by St. Paul himself." Repeated throughout the book, this pedantic discovery underlies the author's contention that the modern Christian must open his arms to the world and make secular life his chapel of worship, taken broadly to mean everyday action as well as meditation.

One mistake is made, however, when Mr. Thorman tries to analyze

the behavior of young people. He interprets the denial of organized churches by younger Christians as a denial of God's existence. Actually, however, the basic issue is that they categorize the Church as part of the Establishment and cannot envision a bureaucratized Christianity whose rules and forms seem to stifle any type of living, loving concern for fellow human beings. Thus the author leaves completely unanswered the reader's attempt to understand, e.g., why "hippies" drop out of society and do not desire to become involved.

If Chapters 4 and 5 are aimed at clarifying difficult problems about the Body of Christ as the living Church and of the modern meaning of grace, they eminently fail in that objective. In addition, the author sometimes confuses the issues by first emphasizing that the Church consists of the followers of Christ and, then, equating the Church with a hierarchical organization, separate from its members.

Chapters 8 and 11, on the other hand, are excellent. In the former, prayer and the sacraments take on deeper significance for the modern layman: "Our liturgical and our personal prayers are intertwined and mutually supporting. Without one or the other our Christianity would be incomplete." In the latter, "Virtues for Our Days," the problems of authority and freedom within the Church are very well handled. But this reviewer must disagree strongly with Mr. Thorman's description of the virtue of poverty: "If we are poor, we must learn... to accept poverty as a good and holy thing which can detach us from the world and lead us the more quickly to the riches of Christ." This is a serious error, akin to the medieval interpretation of usury as objectively evil. Actual poverty is not virtuous; rather, it is our attitude toward riches that will leave its mark upon us. It is heartening to hear that religious orders are considering changing the "Vow of Pov-

erty" to the "Vow of Service"—for the latter term seems to embody more accurately the ideal involved. The Christian apostolate includes freeing men in the economic spheres as well as the social and political areas, as the author does acknowledge later in the text.

As for Chapter 10, "The Christian as a Reader," the author gives us some fine recommendations for the modern Christian in terms of provocative and insightful books to be read. However, this is where the merits of this chapter end. It is here that we find him clearly evading the word "change" in the description of renewal in the Church. Why deny that things are changing in form, attitude, and points of emphasis of traditionally held views? To refuse to use the word smacks of a rigid, pre-conciliar manner of envisioning Christianity. Moreover, at one point he recognizes that modern comparisons with saints' lives must be guarded since they lived in quite different circumstances; and then he states in the same chapter that "saint after saint has testified to the necessity and influence of reading on their lives." A final drawback of this chapter is the exclusion of periodicals from his reading list. How about keeping up with **Ave Maria**, **Extension**, **America**, **Commonweal**, **The Lamp**, and the **National Catholic Reporter**, to name a few? Surely these are invaluable sources of Christian inspiration and understanding which probably do more to test and question our principles (thereby keeping us alert and developing Christ-followers) than most of the books on his list.

Generally, **The Christian Vision** is very valuable reading for any Catholic aware of his changing religion and wanting to do some positive things about it. Once over the hurdles of some sweeping generalizations and slightly erratic writing, the reader may sit back and listen to a layman of tremendous dedication, one

who evidently has experienced both the satisfaction and the disappointment of daring to be a fully committed follower of Christ. And that is more than most Christian layman can say.

— Frank D. Tinari

The Experience of God's Presence. By Anselm Moynihan, O.P. New York: Alba House, 1967. Pp. 96. Cloth, \$1.95.

The author's deft use of concrete anecdotes and innumerable quotations—usually from the mystics—makes for an easy to read presentation of the Christian life as one lived in the presence of God. Eight short chapters run through the usual themes: the need for prayer, the reality of Providence, the Indwelling, etc.

The title of this book proved thoroughly misleading, at least to this reviewer. Whereas one would expect a book addressed to today's general Christian audience and devoted to an examination of the "experience of God's presence" to come to grips with some of the questions raised by Leslie Dewart, Gabriel Marcel, Paul Tillich, etc., this one makes no attempt to deal with any contemporary insight at all. The first couple of pages, it is true, mention atheism outside of Catholic circles, and humanitarianism within the Church; but absolutely no sympathy is shown for any insight these two phenomena may contain.

The book reads, in fact—despite its clear and attractive grammatical style—like a smoothed-out version of the author's class notes. And the class in question would have had to be a 1920-style presentation of the "perennial and safe truths the Church has always taught." One certainly would like to see an up-to-date presentation and defense of these traditional positions, but not this sort of transliteration of them into a banal and unoriginal summary.

— Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M.

Speaking of God. Edited by Denis Dirscherl, S.J. Milwaukee: Bruce, 1967. Pp. xi-158. Cloth, \$4.75.

This is an anthology in which all the essays deal with some aspect of faith, but differ widely in approach and methodology. Only the last two are intrinsically related to one another.

The first two essays, by Father James A. Mohler, S.J., are positive studies on faith in St. Augustine and St. Thomas respectively. Both are competently done, but the one on Augustine will perhaps have more to say to our contemporaries. It is also a more valuable contribution in that less of its material can be found elsewhere in contemporary theological writing.

Father Dirscherl's own presentation, on "The Death of God in Karl Marx," furnishes a very valuable presentation of Marxist sources which are virtually inaccessible to the average reader because they are so widely scattered in the writings of Marx and Engels.

"The Church and Contemporary Atheism," by Father J. Martin Posadas, S.J., is a well written plea for adaptation and real give-and-take in the Church's dealings with contemporary atheists.

Father David J. Stagman, S.J., does a most creditable job, especially in view of the small space allotted him, of dealing with "The Death of God in Recent Protestant Theology." His essay is, ideally, not a substitute for first-hand acquaintance with the writings of the radical theologians, but a fine introduction to their ideas. It should certainly be read by those unable, for one or another reason, to approach the sources.

Any collection in which the work of Martin E. Marty is included is worth buying on that account alone. Dr. Marty is his usual competent self, here, as he seeks to enlighten the reader regarding "Protestant Roots of the Problem of God." The roots in question are scarcely recog-

nizable in Luther and Calvin, but—to extend the metaphor—they begin to push above ground in a most evident way in Kant, Hegel, and Kierkegaard. This important thematic investigation of Protestant theology is one that definitely should not be missed.

Those who have read Dr. Eugene Fontinell's significant article in *Cross Currents* will rejoice to see it reprinted in this volume. "Reflections on Faith and Metaphysics" is a smoothly written and well thought out plea for a reconsideration of Catholicism's metaphysical presuppositions. In Dr. Fontinell, what is best and most promising in evolutionary pragmatism has found an able and authoritative Catholic spokesman. Whether the Catholic faith will admit of this sort of symbolic explication is a question that cannot yet be definitively answered.

Father Joseph Owens, C.Ss.R., takes issue with Dr. Fontinell in the closing essay, "This Sublime Truth." Father Owens' insistence that Thomism either contains formally or can make provision logically for all truth, is not new; but the position has rarely if ever found such eloquent expression. For all we know, moreover, Father Owens may be right. We too have experienced the intellectual satisfaction he describes as arising from an appreciation of Thomism's mighty grandeur and profound consistency. Despite his eloquence, however, we doubt very much that Thomism can really be adapted to an evolutionary world-view, or that it can be made to speak to the majority of our contemporaries. In view of the author's disagreement with Pegis' translation of St. Thomas' Latin for his title phrase, "This Sublime Truth," his repeated mistake, *sublima* for *sublimis*, further mars an essay which few will be inclined to take seriously.

— Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M.

The Structure of Christian Existence. By John B. Cobb, Jr. Philadelphia:

The Westminster Press, 1967. Pp. 160. Cloth, \$4.50.

This is a fascinating sequel to Dr. Cobb's *A Christian Natural Theology*, published last year. Whereas that book treated of the "overlap between philosophy and theology," this one has to do mainly with the "overlap between history and theology." Thus it seems really to be the second stage in a trilogy designed, with the aid of Whiteheadian metaphysics and careful historical analysis, to present the Christian claim to finality in the strongest possible light.

The third book will, according to Dr. Cobb, deal directly with Christ and the Redemption. The present volume, then, serves as a needed historical basis for the next one. In its pages, the author treats of the gradual emergence of Christianity and seeks, by presenting it as one among many *de facto* structures of existence, to clarify it as radically divergent from every other such structure. Only after this has been painstakingly done, does he venture, in the final chapter, to propose a tentative evaluation of the Christian claim to finality.

The categories used by Dr. Cobb are mainly those of psychology; his concern is to show Christianity as the most advanced stage of psychological evolution, even while insisting on the very real value of the religious alternatives, particularly Buddhism. His method is, by using a very high degree of abstraction, to prescind not only from the welter of details but even from the major "modes" of existence manifest in history, so as to isolate the most general "structures" which have continued to evolve long after biological evolution ceased to have real importance in human development.

By "existence," Dr. Cobb means "what a subject is in and for himself in his givenness to himself." This existence has successively assumed two fundamental structures: the pre-axial and the axial. The former can

be resolved into the "archaic," beginning around 8000 B.C., and the "civilized," beginning around 4000 B.C. The crossing of the threshold between pre-axial and axial structures occurred during the first millennium before Christ and consisted in the movement of the "seat of existence" in man from the unconscious to reflexive consciousness. While evolution has meant an increasing importance of the conscious in man's psychic life, the preponderance of human experience remains rooted in the unconscious.

Omitting consideration of the Persian and Chinese axial revolutions, Dr. Cobb analyzes the Buddhist, the Homeric, the Socratic, the Prophetic, and the Christian structures of existence. (I tried to summarize these chapters for this review, but any attempt to do so, I have become convinced, is to do Dr. Cobb's finely developed presentation an injustice.) I have already mentioned the author's tentative evaluation of the Christian claim, set forth in the last chapter pending publication of his next book. It remains, therefore, to refer to the penultimate chapter in which "Love" is rejected as a valid criterion for judging that claim, because love itself is a function of the standpoint, or "structure of existence" from which it is evaluated. An appendix, finally, contains a skillful refutation of the claim that Gnosticism, rather than axial Judaism, forms the historical root of Christianity.

This book is a badly needed expansion of the excellent but dense chapters in Schoonenberg's *God's World in the Making*; it is strongly reminiscent of Guardini's more psychological writings; and it is clearly redolent of the Whitehead of *Adventures of Ideas and Modes of Thought*. Dr. Cobb is not only a profound thinker; he is a most competent writer, and he has been careful, in this excellent study, to develop his argument closely and organically, so that each chapter grows naturally out of

the preceding one. For all its depth and erudition, however, the book makes comparatively easy reading. It is remarkably devoid of technical terminology and of unnecessary documentation, and it can certainly be read with great profit by the average educated reader interested in comparative religion, evolution of culture, or the philosophy and history of religion.

— Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M.

The New Essence of Christianity. By William Hamilton. Revised Edition. New York: Association Press, 1966. Pp. 159. Cloth, \$3.50.

Just as no existentialist philosopher speaks for another, so no "death-of-God" theologian can venture to speak for anyone but himself. This book, therefore, cannot be said to be a key to the understanding of the whole "death-of-God movement." But it is a "basic statement" of a major radical theologian, according to the book jacket, and the reader looking for a lucid, broadly based, and as representative as possible exposition of radical theology, would do well to turn to *The New Essence of Christianity*.

Professor Hamilton has set forth his "basic statement" in four well written, forceful chapters. The first, on theological style, is an argument for a fragmentary and somewhat diffident approach to theology, as opposed to an over-confident, synthetic approach. The second, which really sets forth the heart of radical theology, is the author's interpretation of his own experience of the loss of God. To the extent that it remains an individual's interpretation of his own experience, the account is, of course, unobjectionable. Yet there are generalized conclusions here which few Christian, and no Catholic, readers will want to make their own; which is not to say that all these readers do not stand to gain much from a careful reading of this eloquent chapter. The surest way not to meet the

challenge of radical theology, e.g., is to caricature it as just plain, old atheism. "Neither 'death of God,' 'absence of God,' nor 'disappearance of God' is wholly adequate to describe the full meaning of our religious situation," the author maintains. "Our experience of God is deeply dissatisfying to us, even when we are believers. In one sense, God seems to have withdrawn from the world and its sufferings, and this leads us to accuse him of either irrelevance or cruelty. But in another sense, he is experienced as a pressure and a wounding from which we would love to be free. For many of us who call ourselves Christians, therefore, believing in the time of the 'death of God' means that he is there when we do not want him, in ways we do not want him, and he is not there when we do want him" (p. 65).

The third chapter is on "Jesus the Lord." It contains some very strange Christology indeed, in that the kenotic aspect of the Incarnation is allowed completely to eclipse trinitarian considerations. This is, of course, the heart of Altizer's "Christian atheism" and one of the points at which it coincides practically with Hamilton's "new Christianity." We do very much want to take seriously the emphasis of both on our Lord's humanity, but as Rahner has pointed out, to say that Nicea, Ephesus, and Chalcedon were beginnings is not to want to

dismiss lightly, or even disregard, their hard-won doctrinal gains. In certain practical areas, at any rate, this chapter offers valuable insights; and its main thesis is by no means altogether false: "Lordship as humiliation answers the questions." Hamilton's suggestion that God's eventual triumph as depicted in 1 Cor. 15 is wholly eschatological, is a point of contact between radical theology and process philosophy which deserves to be taken seriously. Something, surely, has to be done with the traditional notion of God's omnipotence.

The final chapter is a gradual elaboration of the author's notion of the proper moral stance for today's Christian. Rejecting as insufficiently detailed the traditional notion of the "imitation of Christ," he himself gives a deliberately vague characterization of the Christian life. His vagueness here seems to stem from a quasi-mystical notion of the world's absorption into Christ, again strongly reminiscent of Altizer's Hegelianism. Yet there are some precise and valuable suggestions, such as a plea for a sense of reserve in our dealings with one another, and for a balance between tolerance and anger such as the Lord showed during his public life. The book closes with the fertile suggestion that the Christian as such has much to learn from woman's role in marriage. Hamilton is not so gauche as to equate femininity and

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passivity; on the contrary there is a depth and balance here which make this section one of the book's highlights.

The *New Essence of Christianity* is a serious work on theology. It is replete with literary references, which are often used to excellent advantage. Its theological sources are, of course, almost exclusively Protestant—it thus forms an interesting counterpart to Leslie Dewart's *The Future of Belief*: both books raise essentially the same question, and the fact that neither book comes up with any really satisfactory answers may bespeak difficult years immediately ahead of us. There is no way of telling just how extensive a segment of Christianity is represented by Hamilton's writing, but he is an eloquent spokesman and deserves a hearing.

— Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M.

A Theology of Marriage. By Charles P. Kindregan. Milwaukee: Bruce, 1967. Pp. xiv-162. Cloth, \$4.50; paper, \$1.95.

A Theology of Marriage is a straightforward, easy to read book which places marriage where it belongs in the scheme of things. Per-

spective is what the book has and what it gives—the reader is really led to realize how marriage is a Christian vocation. The chapters on Christian sex education and responsible parenthood are done exceptionally well, buttressed by the latest findings in psychology and the latest papal pronouncements. The biological details of sex are, in their place, adequately and simply explained.

The chapter on "Preparing for Marriage" might have been improved if Mr. Kindregan—the author is a layman, the father of three—had written a little on how dating is so different from marriage, the former being mostly fun-oriented; the latter, task-oriented. Failure to realize this fact of life causes no end of foul-ups in marriage.

A Theology of Marriage seems a little too amply footnoted, but in view of its purpose—to serve as a textbook for a college course in the theology of marriage—that may not even be a fault. No doubt this will be one textbook that isn't sold at the end of the semester. No doubt, too, that it offers fine food for CFM-ers and young Christian couples seeking to find and live the meaning of marriage in their Christian life.

— Deborah Davies Schiffler

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