COVER AND ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

The cover and all illustrations for the November issue were d
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the CORD

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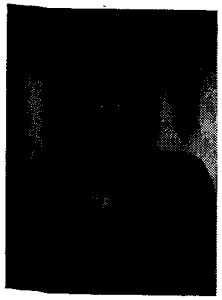
The End of Conventional Christianity



In a provocative book released last month by the Newman Press, Dr. W. H. Van de Pol offers what he calls a "phenomenological" (pp. 10-1 59, etc.) description of the contemporary Christia scene.[1] "Phenomenological" means detached a scientific— hence this analysis is supposed to be void of evaluation and personal opinion, except, the author's own admission, for the last few pa graphs. In the main this objective is borne in mi but there are notable lapses, as in the use of s terms as "bourgeois morality" (p. 41), "obstinacy" of the Holy Office 53), as in apodictic predictions of what is to take place "inevitably" 118), and as in the definitive judgment on traditional Christianity a religion that "no longer answers questions of daily life in a form mod man can understand" (p. 119). There are a lot of statements like th which will bring charges of carelessness and irresponsibility against author, but which may or may not really affect the substance of his th

As a projection of trends, this book depends heavily for its credibi on the witness of numbers: How many Christians actually bear out i personal crisis of faith the sort of testimony the author gives? We are t of a "large-scale indifference" (p. 47), of periodicals in "many countri (p. 52), and of "thousands of people" who have turned against Christia (p. 66). Although I would like to see more careful use of statistics I m candidly admit that my own limited experience certainly yields evide along the lines furnished by Van de Pol. I just wonder whether it is v to project from this side of our mutual experience the sort of unive demise of conventional Christianity that the author sees as inevitable.

The phenomenological method adopted requires, of course, the in chapter explaining "conventionality" in religion as a characteristic whe

(Continued on page

[1] William H. Van de Pol, **The End of Conventional Christianity.** T Theodore Zuydwijk, S.J.; New York: Newman, 1968. Pp. vi-297. Cloth,

Theology, Politics, and Mysticism

The Modernity of Gregory Palamas (c. 1296 - 1359)

Hilda Graef

The mystical theology of the Eastern Church is not always easy to understand for Western Christians, brought up in the Latin tradition. For it is much less systematic and not influenced by scholasticism, as so many Western mystics were; we need only think of Master Eckhart or Saint John of the Cross. Today we are approaching the Eastern Church much more sympathetically; the Pope himself frequently meets the Patriarch Athenagoras; therefore it is very necessary that we Catholics should know a little more about Eastern Christian thought. And one of the most famous of its representatives is Gregory Palamas.

Palamas lived in an age that was full of wars and dissensions, not unlike our own. The fourteenth century may nevertheless well be called the mystical century par excellence, for it did not only produce Gregory Palamas and his followers in the East, but also a great many mystics in the West, such as Master Eckhart, John Tauler, Catherine of Siena, and Mother Julian.

Gregory belonged to a very devout family. Though his father was a senator and moved in court circles, he was so much given to prayer that even during the sessions of the senate he frequently became completely absorbed in contemplation. So it is not surprising that the young Gregory should have been drawn to prayer, since he had such an example before him. He was educated together with the Byzantine Emperor's grandson Andronicus, who was himself later to become emperor. But though Gregory had a very good early education he did not prolong his studies; for at the age of twenty he became a monk at the famous monastery of Mount Athos. He did not come to the religious life alone, rather like Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, he persuaded several close relatives to accompany him, while his widowed mother and two of his sisters became nuns.

At Mount Athos Gregory at once placed himself under the direction of a hesychast. The word **hesychast** derives from the Greek **hesychia,**

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meaning both solitude and tranquillity. Though community life was not ruled out, the hesychast was a person who led a mainly solitary life and devoted himself to a particular form of prayer which combined breathing exercises with a certain repetitive vocal prayer, the so-called Jesus-prayer. Through this form of prayer the hesychast hoped to achieve ever increasing nearness to God and a vision of the divine light.

When about 1325 the Turks invaded the Eastern Empire and were nearing Mount Athos, it became impossible for Gregory to stay there, and he went to Thessalonica, accompanied by eleven companions. Like so many mystics before and after him he must have been a very attractive and forceful personality, who always made friends who placed themselves willingly under his influence. In Thessalonica he soon became the leader of a spiritual circle of both religious and lay people. He also was ordained priest there and retired to a hermitage in order to lead a more strictly contemplative life. The Eastern hermits usually lived alone for five days of the week, but on Saturdays and Sundays they joined other monks and hermits for the celebration of the Eucharist and spiritual conversation. After five years at Thessalonica Gregory had to move again, this time because of the Serbian invasion. Thus his life was as greatly disturbed by political upheavals as that of many of our own contemporaries, and refugees abounded in the Eastern Empire of the fourteenth century as they do in the Europe, the Middle and Far East of our own.

Gregory now returned to Mount Athos and settled in the hermitage of Saint Sabas. There he began to write, first a Life of Saint Peter, a saint of Mount Athos, then a "Treatise on the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple," in which he defended the historicity of the story of Mary's presentation, the feast of which was then celebrated with great splendour in the East. This treatise shows his great devotion to the Mother of God which has always been a characteristic of the Eastern Church.

But Palamas did not enjoy the peace of his hermitage for long, because soon he became involved in a bitter controversy. This is particularly interesting today; for its main cause was the opposition of the anti-intellectual mysticism of hesychasm to the philosophy and the secular tendencies of the incipient Renaissance in the West. This was represented by Barlaam, a Greek-speaking monk from Calabria who, being a philosopher rather than a mystic, had absorbed the critical spirit of the new movement. Barlaam was convinced that God was completely transcendent and unknowable to such an extent that he could not even be experienced in prayer. As the hesychasts claimed such an experience Barlaam ridiculed them, nicknaming them **omphalopsychoi**, that is to say men whose souls are in the navel, because they affirmed that the body, too, has its share in prayer. Barlaam was so incensed against the monks that he even

complained about them to the Patriarch, John Calecas, but was told to leave them alone unless he wanted to be punished for his slanders.

Palamas now wrote his first treatise "In Defence of the Holy Hesychasts," in which he attacked the purely secular knowledge of Barlaam and defended the divine knowledge of the monks, gained in their contemplative prayer. In 1339 Barlaam went to Avignon to enlist the support of the Pope for his teaching (the Popes being then in exile in Avignon); but Benedict XII had no desire to get involved in the controversy, and when Barlaam returned to Constantinople he found that Palamas had written a second treatise against him. So the controversy continued. Palamas was defended by an old friend of his, Gregory Akindynos, though this man later turned against him. But at this time Akindynos advised Barlaam to stop attacking the prayer of the hesychasts. If he did want to quarrel with Palamas he should rather attack his controversial theological ideas about the nature and energies of God. Barlaam, however, did not heed this advice, but continued to attack the hesychast method of prayer.

Palamas now drew up an extensive document, the so-called "Hagioretic Tome," "for the defense of the hesychasts against those who, because of their own lack of experience, reject the mysterious activities of the Spirit which are produced in those who live according to the Spirit and which are manifested in acts and not demonstrated in words." This document, in which Barlaam was attacked without being named, was signed by a large number of Church authorities, and the bishop of Mount Athos even excommunicated him.

Barlaam, however, would not be silent and now attacked Palamas by name in a treatise called "Against the Messalians." The Messalians were a sect who had flourished in the fourth and fifth centuries of our era and had taught, among other things, that the perfect could attain to a direct vision of the Trinity, even here on earth. So Barlaam openly accused Palamas and his followers of heresy, as the Messalians had been officially condemned by the Church. Hence several councils were held in 1341 to settle the matter. At this time Andronicus, the friend of Palamas, was on the throne, and he forbade Barlaam to accuse the latter of heresy. The first council, which was held in June, ended in reconciliation; but Andronicus died a few days later, and Barlaam returned to the attack. So another council was held in July, in the presence of John Cantacuzenus, who was at that time the Grand Domestic, that is to say a very high official, and the virtual ruler of the Eastern Empire, who later became Emperor himself. He favoured Barlaam, and now there began a series of typically Byzantine intrigues and counter-intrigues between Cantacuzenus on the one hand, and the Patriarch of Constantinople, Calecas, and the widowed Empress Anna on the other. Finally, during an absence of Cantacuzenus from

the capital the patriarch staged a coup d'état, and the Grand Domestic was declared an enemy of the Empire and deprived of all his possessions.

Palamas realized that this could only lead to civil war; hence he opposed the patriarch while urging reconciliation between him, the Empress and Cantacuzenus. The patriarch, however, refused to entertain such an idea and now became an embittered enemy of Palamas. Together with the Empress he intrigued against him, had him imprisoned, and in 1344 even excommunicated. Soon, however, the Patriarch fell out with the Empress and was himself deposed. Palamas now used his influence to make peace between Cantacuzenus and the Empress, and finally Cantacuzenus and Anna's son were established as co-emperors, and Anna's son married Cantacuzenus' daughter. Thus the victory of Cantacuzenus was also a victory for the peace moves of Palamas, who was now appointed archbishop of Thessalonica.

He was, however, prevented from taking possession of his see by the so-called "zealots," the party of the poor, a sort of Byzantine socialists. He therefore returned to Mount Athos, now under Serbian domination. There he met the Serbian king, Stephen Dushan, who tried to persuade Palamas to support him in his ambition to become emperor. Palamas, however, remained loyal, and so Dushan sent him to Constantinople on some business, no doubt because he feared his influence on the monks of Mount Athos. In 1350 Palamas could finally take possession of his see, where he often preached against the injustices of the rich and powerful which had given rise to the excesses of the Zealots.

But even then the controversies round the doctrine of Palamas had not come to an end. In 1351 yet another council took place, during which his oponents were asked to explain their views. The discussions centered on the Palamite doctrine of the divine energies, which will be explained presently, and resulted in Palamas being once more declared orthodox.

After his return to Thessalonica Palamas devoted himself to the pacification of his see. But soon he was asked to go on a political mission to Constantinople to effect a reconciliation between Cantacuzenus and the other Emperor, the son of Anna, who had again been at war with each other. On the way to the capital Palamas was taken prisoner by the Turks and took advantage of the situation to enter into controversy with the Mohammedans and speak to them about the Christian religion. Far from denouncing the Turkish conquest of Christian lands, he saw it as an opportunity to convert the Mohammedans, and the latter, in their turn, treated him very courteously and arranged for formal discussions. When the necessary ransom had been sent, Palamas returned first to Constantinople and then to his see, where he spent his last years preaching and praying. He died in November 1359 and was soon canonized by the Orthodox Church.

There are two points in his teaching which are of special importance: the doctrine of the divine energies and the Palamite teaching on prayer.

The doctrine of the divine energies is not easy to understand, especially for minds brought up in the theology of the West. Perhaps it may best be explained as an attempt to harmonize the transcendence of God with his action in the world, and as such it is particularly relevant for our own time. For writers like, for example, the Bishop of Woolwich of **Honest to God** notoriety, present traditional Christian teaching as speaking of a God out there or up there, while having nothing to say about the God deep down, or the God acting in the world and in human beings. Now it is quite untrue that Christianity is concerned only with a God out there or up there. Many centuries before the Bishop of Woolwich Christian thinkers have known that God is present in the world and in the souls of men. And Gregory Palamas has elaborated especially this teaching of the God active in the world, which had indeed rarely been neglected by the great Christian theologians. But Palamas emphasized it particularly and developed it in his teaching about the divine energies.

What are these so-called energies? They are the links, as it were, between the transcendent and unapproachable Godhead and the world. The Trinity Itself cannot be known by any created intellect, for in his innermost being God is known only to himself. But he can be known by his working **ad extra**, outwards, and he works outwards through his energies. Among these energies are, for example, his wisdom, his goodness, his providence, his majesty. Now when we speak of God's wisdom we mean most often the Word, the Logos, that is to say the divine Son, who is also called the divine Wisdom. But this is the Wisdom within the Trinity, it is not the wisdom that is a divine energy. As an energy this wisdom is, as it were, a quality of God through which he works outwards, in relation to man, to the world. And the same is true of his goodness and of his other energies.

This, however, does not mean that God is divided. These energies subsist all within the divine unity, they are so to speak manifestations through which we can have a certain knowledge of God. They are the means, too, by which God unites himself to us, so that we ourselves become "deified." In the spirituality of the East deification plays a very important part. What

Saint John of the Cross calls the transforming union, the Greeks call deification, for they are less afraid than we are to use such words in relation to mortal men, and they take the words of Christ: "You are gods" very seriously. Thus God unites himself to us through his energies, which are themselves divine and uncreated. As Jean Meyendorff, who is perhaps the greatest living authority on Palamas, expresses it, "The energies or divine acts belong to the existence of God himself; they represent his existence for us." Thus they are God and Godhead, while nevertheless being caused by God. To quote Meyendorff again: "The same God reveals himself and yet remains transcendent to his own revelation."

This may sound paradoxical, but then our human language can express God only in paradoxes. This seems to me one of the malaises of our time: what I like to call our pop-theologians seem to have lost all sense of mystery and of the divine paradox expressing it: If something is not easily understandable they consider it old-fashioned and not in keeping with the modern world; they chatter about religionless Christianity, the death of God, secular religion and whathaveyou. But God can never be made coextensive with the world or with our own understanding. There is always the transcendent centre, which is the reality of God as he is in his inmost being. It is sheer religious and theological nonsense to talk both of a God up there and of a God deepdown, unless we take such words to be metaphors for something human language is too poor to express.

But it is just as wrong to teach like Barlaam, and in our own time Karl Barth, that God is so totally other that man cannot get into touch with him at all. Because God is our Creator he desires to get in touch with his creatures. Western theologians say that he has done this once and for all in the Incarnation and continues to do this through the Holy Spirit and the Church with her sacraments. Now Palamas of course is quite aware of this, too; indeed, he has the greatest devotion to the Mother of God and the Eucharist.

But for him the incarnate Son and the Spirit belong to what is called the hypostatic sphere; they are Persons who belong to the Godhead by their very essence; they do not come into existence through the divine will, because they belong to the divine nature and no created being can participate in them in so far as they are divine. The energies, on the other hand, are an expression of God's will, as it were, and created beings can share in them. Perhaps we may say that they are the instruments of God's action in history outside the Incarnation and all that belongs to it.

Now though all this is very difficult to grasp and has often been rejected by Western theologians, it ought not to be condemned out of hand, for the thought behind it is subtle in the extreme and presupposes the whole Greek theology with its differentiations between nature and person, the hypostatic sphere of the Trinity and the relation of the divine essence to the three divine Persons. What we should retain is that Palamas believes in an essentially unknowable Godhead, the Trinity, and the action of this Godhead outside the divine sphere. It is this action which is relevant to us, in which the living God of the Bible, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob manifests himself, not, as Pascal was to express it several centuries later, the God of the philosophers. For the God of the philosophers is, as it were, static, whereas the God of the divine energies, the God of Palamas, is dynamic, acting in creation, acting in man. Through the divine energies man comes into living contact with God, and this living contact is prayer, the prayer of the hesychasts in which, as Palamas claims, "God lets himself be seen face to face, and not in enigmas... though not in his superessential essence." This doctrine of the energies is therefore an attempt to explain how the transcendent God can make contact with his creatures while remaining essentially transcendent.

Hesychast prayer has often been attacked in the West because it makes use of the body, of postures, and of breathing. The hesychast does not use meditation in the Latin sense in order to lead him to contemplation. Instead he breathes slowly in and out, saying at the same time: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me." Now this breathing is not an end in itself, it is simply a means to lead to greater concentration. Since Christ was incarnate in a human body, it is only consistent that the body, too, should take part in the prayer that is designed to bring us into close touch with God and Christ. Through regular breathing the human mind is concentrated, through the constant repetition of the Jesus prayer it is concentrated on Christ.

However, more important than any physical preparation is the spiritual preparation: the attainment of the purity of the heart, the conquest of the passions, which plays such an essential part in all Eastern spirituality. By the combination of both, the Jesus prayer with its physical accompaniments and the purity of the heart attained by asceticism, the Christian will arrive at the vision of the light, that divine light which is one of the divine energies. Thus, through the doctrine of these energies, of which the divine light is one, Palamas has combined the doctrine of the unknowability of God with the mystical experience of the presence and the indwelling of God. This is how Palamas defends the method by which the hesychasts arrive at it.

> It is not out of place to teach, especially with beginners, people to look at themselves, and by means of breathing to send the mind back into themselves. No man of sense would forbid anybody to use certain procedures in order to collect his mind within himself. As people who undertake this struggle continually find their mind flying off as soon as it has been collected,

continual too is the need to bring it back to themselves. That is why some have recommended control of breathing in and out and holding the breath a little, so as to hold the mind, too.

This is hesychast prayer as taught by Palamas; the physical exercises are no more than a means to an end, a way of getting rid of the distractions that are inevitable in the case of all beginners in the life of prayer. Faithful practice will lead to the vision of the divine light, the same light that the disciples saw on Mount Thabor with their physical eyes. But for the Christian mystic this will be an even higher vision than for the disciples, because through the Eucharist he is more intimately united to Christ than the three disciples were on Mount Thabor, and through this vision of the uncreated light the innermost soul will be illuminated. This light is the light of the world to come, the divine light, and so the experience which Palamas describes may truly be called an eschatological experience. For he writes: "Is it not evident that there is only one and the same divine light: that which the disciples saw on Thabor, that which purified souls contemplate even now, and that which is the substance of the good things to come?"

There has been considerable controversy about this idea of the uncreated light, but it is in perfect harmony with Palamas' teaching on the divine energies. These are certainly ideas which at first sight will seem strange to western minds, because we are wont to restrict the term **uncreated** to the Godhead and the divine Persons. These theological niceties are indeed difficult and impossible to explain satisfactorily in a brief article. What I should like to emphasize is this, that we ought to take Orthodox mystical theology very seriously and not to dismiss it out of hand because it differs from our own. For especially at the present time, when so many even of our own theologians and religious writers are leaning over backwards to understand and recommend secular Christianity, the God is dead theology, and other highly questionable concepts, it is essential to try to understand authentically Christian thought. It is surely part of our troubles that through the break with the East the West has lost much of its genuine Christian inheritance. We have become too legalistic, and recently even too materialistic in our views. A little more of the mystical thought of the East, of its sense of the Divine and its religious view of the whole man could only enrich us and may also provide a bulwark against the increasingly rationalistic trends in our own Church.

History, tradition, and numerous ecclesiastical institutions manifest luminously how much the universal Church is indebted to the Eastern Churches.

— Decree on Ecumenism, §5

Advent Song

Mother Mary Francis, P. C. C.

Season of tempest and magnificence
Is mercy for the heart. We shall bear thunder
Standing, but this hush upon the heart,
This hour of low kindling of the stars,
This snowflake silence of your coming, Child,
Anvils our shapely words back into dumbness.

The Lord is near! He leaves no place for crouching
Safe against His gaze. The dimes and nickels
Of our falseness hit on gleaming pavements
Of His coming. For the Lord is near,

As songs we have not sung yet. Love is lurking
In nebulae of breath, is perched on spiral
Of rib, swims arteried lakes, is coming, coming!

Might is a concept any slave can live by,
Churls with bent necks shall praise Omnipotence;
But come and help us walk this wild, sweet country
Of hush and waiting. Teach us how to yearn.

MONTHLY CONFERENCE

The Mass: The Sacrifice of the Whole Christ

Valens Waldschmidt, O. F. M.

All human thoughts stand in need of a synthesis, a unifying force to bind them together. What are so many scraps of information, lying undigested in the mind, become a part of a philosophy of life under the guidance of judgment. In everyday language, we ask about a certain person: "What does he stand for? What are the centers of his convictions and hence the mainspring of his actions?" Just as a lens gathers together the many rays of light and converges them on a single point, so men's thoughts, judgments, and very lives must have a point of focus.

Father Valens Waldschmidt, O.F.M., is a retreat master stationed at St. Anthony's Friary in Streator, Illinois. In this second of three conferences on the Eucharist, Father Valens emphasizes the liturgical actuality—here-and-now effectiveness—of the Mass as the summit of Christian spirituality.

Our spiritual lives also demand a synthesis. Without brushing aside all the subtleties and complexities that the grace of God can express in human intellects, will and emotions, we still search for the pinpoint of light and color at which all mysteries of the spiritual life converge. The point of greatest brilliance and most intense heat is the Mass — the greatest act of the Mystical Body, the lens that gathers the flow and ebb of spiritual life together and expresses itself in the action of adoration, thanksgiving, satisfaction, and petition. This is the hour when the members and Head unite and converge in the closest of unions expressing the precious moments in time when the soul encounters Christ and foretelling eternal moments in the future when Christ and souls will be manifested to the world in the fulfillment of the whole Christ, in a timeless majesty and glory.

Only the quick sweep of panoramic thought can in some way hint at the expanse of mystery that is sheltered in the Mass. Only hours of thought and meditation hold out the possibility of discovering such realities so that they become personal experiences. It is the Mass which is the Sacrament and Sacrifice of the New Law and which is, as it were, the chalice containing within its cup the new agreement or plans of God. In and through the Mass the soul is united to Christ and is able to travel the way that leads to the Most Holy Trinity. In the most beautiful and most sacramentally complete way the soul becomes one with Christ in his sacrifice, his Priesthood, and his Victimhood — in his thoughts, desires and immolation. The Mass is a sign, sacrament and sacrifice of the Elevation, Redemption, and Fulfillment of man coming from God and of man returning to God.

Saint Francis, who had such love for the Holy Eucharist, help us always to participate in this mystery and to experience the sweep of its unity and love.

The Scriptural Setting

Minds and hearts crave the repetition of good and beautiful things. The little child asks for repetition even of a trick of magic or an old story. The art lover travels miles to see old familiar scenes painted with new inspiration and interpretation. The literateur reads and re-reads classical expressions of human experience. In the same way, the soul does not tire of asking: "Who is God?" "Who is man?" And the answer to these questions has been given in the words of Christ, if only we think long and hard enough on them: "Do this in commemoration of me." Here words become reality. Thoughts change into love.

The Mass and its liturgy is not simply poetry. It presents life. As the Prayer over the Gifts for the ninth Sunday after Pentecost expresses it, "As often as the memorial of this sacrificial offering is celebrated, the work of our re-

demption is enacted." This prayer sets the framework of thought in our souls into which words of Sacred Scripture fit so well, telling us of one new way to God. "And while they were at supper, Jesus took bread and blessed and broke, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take and eat; this is my Body." And taking a cup, he gave thanks and gave it to them saying, "All of you drink of this; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is being shed for many unto the forgiveness of sins" (Mt. 26:26-28).

The Doctrinal Basis

The Mass is a compendium of spirituality. In the Mass, we experience in a sacramental way our highest fulfillment of love and union with God, while on earth. Here we encounter the mystery which is not about Christ, but the mystery which is Christ. Behind every Mass is Calvary, where our blessed Lord hung between two thieves and offered his life in obedience to his Father. The Priest and Victim hangs between heaven and earth, bringing God down to man and lifting man up to God. Christ is the Mediator, the Bridge-builder, between God and man.

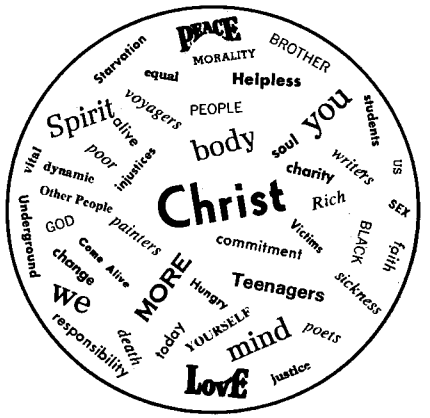
But Christ's Sacrifice has a living, urgent presence about it, the "eternal now." It is taking place "now." How is this possible? As theologians point out, the sacrificial immolation which our Lord made on Calvary is ever present in his soul now, in the presence of his heavenly Father. We might say that the thoughts and loves in his heart are not of a passing moment, but continue to be offered to God, continue to be as fresh in the depths of his heart as on the first Good Friday afternoon when, in the darkness of the gloom of Calvary, he willed to die for the sins of men. What was accomplished on Calvary, continues in the glorified Christ and becomes manifested and continued in the Mass. If Christ acts through the sacraments, how much more evident it is that he acts in and through the Mass! As Father Philipon writes, it was especially "for the Church that Jesus instituted the Eucharist, so that she might have a sacrifice that contains the crucified Christ as he was when he offered himself on the Cross."[1]

One lesson that the Mass continues to impart to us, is the "present now" in the celebration of all mysteries clustered about and enacted in the Mass. Christmas is not a far-off event of the distant past, but the grace of the Mystery of the Incarnation as happening "now." The adoration, thanksgiving, atonement, and supplication of the Mass are not dead formulas but living actions of Christ in union with his mystical body, continuing the celebrated mystery at the present moment. The Mass is not just a history of salvation, but salvation-history being enacted "now" in each participant. Mass is not just a textbook, but the living testimony of Christ taking us to the Blessed Trinity. In prayer and sacrifice, we celebrate the mysteries of Christ "now." In this sense, with the urgency of the present moment we pray in the Mass: "Receive, O Holy Trinity, this offering which we make to you in remembrance of the passion, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ...."

A universal viewpoint must be retained in the Mass. We attend Mass not as isolated individuals but as one body. In communal prayer and sacrifice, we join with Christ and with each other in participating in the Mass. Together we listen to the liturgy of the Word of God; together we participate in the liturgy of the Eucharist from the Offertory to the Doxology; together, from the Our Father to the Blessing, we prepare for and partake of the Eucharistic meal. Recalling the atonement of Calvary, together we receive in thanksgiving the fruits of Christ's Incarnation, Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. The Mass is the complete Christ, the mystical body in the action of worship encompassing the complete mystery of the whole Christ.

Present-Day Needs

Space and sky are now only problems, no longer impossibilities for man. But man's greatest problem is to bridge the human and the divine, earth and heaven, the natural and the supernatural, the soul and God. In the imagery of his thought, man is able to visualize and concretize various unions. He has little trouble drawing pictures of flowers and plants, hand and body, even thought and mind. But the union of the soul with Christ and with the Most Holy Trinity stretches man's vocabulary and strains the index of his understanding. As we all know, this gap is best bridged each day through the sacrifice of the Mass. In the Mass, sin, the obstacle to man's union with God, is opposed by the victory of Christ and now man can be at one with God. In the Mass, man's desire to offer himself to God in a way that has the security of success is accomplished. In the Mass, the Alpha and Omega of the New Law breathes forth the perfect word of Adoration and Thanksgiving. With something of the perfection of the divine Logos, man is able to offer in sacrifice the Word made Flesh.



[1] **The Sacraments in the Christian Life** (Westminster: Newman), 126.

Benefits for Religious Life

Growth in the likeness of Christ, transformation into Christ, assimilation to Christ, identification with Christ — all these are foreshadowed and become a temporal reality in the Mass with its return gift, Holy Communion. For every saint, this was the central means of sanctity. Here is, for all of us, the fountain of life and growth; to this source all the sacraments lead. The virtues are increased, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit flourish. Here is the compendium of the spirituality of action.

Is it surprising, then, that the early Franciscan missionaries always attempted to offer Mass as soon as possible in each new mission field? Mass was said even before churches were erected. To offer Mass was an application of the principle, "first things first," found in the handbooks of missionary methods. In a way, the Mass contained for these missionaries, **everything.**

Resolutions

(1) Establish in your own mind the importance of the Mass. Reevaluate its benefits and convince yourself of its importance by frequent meditation. Prepare for the daily celebration with meditation and prayer. Allow sufficient time for this preparation. (2) Study the Mass. Review the theology of the Mass. Study the liturgy. Let us open our minds to the new viewpoints concerning it. But let us set in balance our attitude toward the Mass, which is more important than mere knowledge regarding it. We cannot let the views of "extremists" become excuses for shutting our mind to the thinking of the Council and the Church. (3) Meditate on the Mass. Learn its asceticism, penance, sorrow for sin, crucifixion. Learn the biblical background to its prayers. Attempt to assimilate the communal attitude of its worship. In each Mass search for a closer union with Christ in his Spirit, so that all may go back to the Father in heaven, for the completion of the mystical body. (4) Learn to live the Mass. Faith, hope, and love have their source in the Mass. Adoration, thanksgiving, atonement and supplication spring from it each day as from a primary source, so that these acts may continue throughout the day, from action to action, "from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof."

Prayer

Saint Francis, teach us to say with special unction the prayer which you were accustomed to say at the Elevation of the Mass: O Lord God, Father in Heaven, look on the glorious countenance of your Christ, and have mercy on me and all other sinners, for whom your blessed Son, our Lord, has deigned to die and for whose salvation and consolation he wished to remain with us in the holy Sacrament of the Altar. With him you are, O Father, and the Holy Spirit, one God and live with the Son and the Holy Spirit, world without end. Amen.

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Sister Shirley Marie Siepker, O.S.F.
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Our whole being should be seized with fear, the whole world should tremble and heaven rejoice, when Christ the Son of the living God is present on the altar in the hands of the priest. What wonderful majesty! What stupendous condescension! O sublime humility! O humble sublimity! That the Lord of the whole universe, God and the Son of God, should humble himself like this and hide under the form of a little bread, for our salvation.

— Saint Francis of Assisi

Letter to a General Chapter, cited from the version of B. Fahy, O. F. M., The Writings of St. Francis of Assisi *Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1964), used with permission.*

Secularization and The Future of Franciscanism

Richard Penaskovic, O. F. M. Conv.

Franciscan writers never tire of telling us that Franciscanism means nothing else than a return to the gospel life. But is not the cry, "Back to the gospel!" an idle one if we fail to keep in mind the questions posed by our own times? Contemporary man asks questions of the gospel which arise out of the life-context of a secularized world. Because we have a different life-context than our forefathers did, we search for answers to different questions from theirs — questions they could not possibly ask. It would seem that the re-evangelization of religious life is possible only in confrontation with our present-day secularized world.

I intend to sketch some aspects of our secularized world which must be borne in mind if the message of Saint Francis is to bear fruit within the hearts of men today. Before I begin, I would like to make two observations. First of all, I will be using the term **modern man** to refer to a broad spectrum of educated Christians, who are concerned, explicitly or implicitly, with the possibility of knowing God's existence and nature from reason alone. Secondly, I do not intend to prove my observations concerning the basic experiences of modern and contemporary man. Many of my comments do not lend themselves to a "proof" in the ordinary sense of the term. I can merely depict a situation, hoping that my experience of the secularized world coincides with yours. Incidentally, in my appraisal of today's secularized world, I am deeply influenced by the thought of A. Goerres, a psychologist from Munich.

I. The Functionalization of Life

Modern man seems to lack a sense for the metaphysical. He couldn't care less about the profound questions about life. The metaphysical question par excellence: viz., "Why is there something rather than nothing?" leaves him cold. The last things do not seem to faze him. The same holds true, **mutatis mutandis**, on the ethical plane. Not only does he lack a sense of guilt, but even his conscience fails to prick his callous skin. The very notions of penance and metanoia turn him off, while fear before God is considered a neurotic symptom.

Father Richard Penaskovic, O.F.M. Conv., is presently writing his dissertation on Cardinal Newman under the direction of H. Fries at the University of Munich. Father Richard pursued his studies for the priesthood at the Universities of Innsbruck and Würzburg.

When a person's life revolves around pleasure and work, enjoyment becomes increasingly primitive, while pleasure becomes less satisfying.

According to A. Goerres, modern man has lost his heart. There seems to be a shrinkage of the human to the categories in which Freud depicted man: enjoyment and achievement. When a person's life revolves around pleasure and work, enjoyment becomes increasingly primitive, while pleasure becomes less satisfying. This functionalization of life leads the natural passions of the soul to addictions and perversions. Witness, for example, the number of drug addicts picked up daily in New York City, or the number of sex crimes committed every day in any large American city.

Modern man appears to have trouble communicating with other men. The Captain in the movie **Cool Hand Luke** unknowingly puts his finger on this problem when he says sardonically that "what we have here is a failure to communicate." The problem of communication forms the theme of the movie **The Graduate**, and this same theme is expressed in some of Antoniani's movies — e. g., **The Red Desert.**

This inability to communicate is not limited to the sphere of interpersonal contacts, but extends to the world at large. Modern man finds it painful to establish contact with the world of buildings, plants, and of animals. This leads to alienation, loneliness, and a feeling of **ennui.** This inability to communicate renders a person incapable of experiencing the world as a simile and metaphor, as a sacrament of God's presence. It is an inability to enter the third dimension — that of mystery — to have genuine leisure, to celebrate a feast, to enjoy the sound of music, to experience quiet, love, joy, and peace. In such a scheme of things, existence slides into absurdity (J. -P. Sartre), life becomes weightless, and man's situation is judged to be meaningless (A. Camus).

It remains extremely difficult for modern man to realize that he has an infinite worth, that he is precious in the eyes of God, the tremendous Lover, that he won't be swallowed up by the meaninglessness of the finite, that he has an eternal destiny. Admittedly, it is hard for man to be cognizant of his uniqueness when working on the General Motors assembly line, or when attending a university with over 50,000 students. Contrary to the view of Harvey Cox, I think that the technological mass civilization in America is a real danger for modern man. It remains a danger for the contem-

plative atmosphere, the atmosphere of wonder and mystery, the womb of philosophy, and the living breath of the soul.

II. The Loss of Trust

According to Goerres, historians are right in beginning modern times with the Reformation. A radical loss of trust begins with the Reformation. Its result is that tradition cannot be true. Consequently the Church, the bearer of tradition, cannot be the true church. With the loss of authority reason was enthroned as a god; faith was declared inhuman. René Descartes ushered in this age of doubt. Man's very constitution, however, calls for two complementary attitudes: critical reason and a trusting belief in credible witnesses. The nature of man demands not only critical reason, but also visible, tangible authority. Man must produce substitute churches, if he loses the Church.

The Church no longer receives the trust it once had. Trust now goes to the government, to institutions of research, to polls, magazines, and television. Through the communications media, modern man receives confirmation that he is on the right track, that he thinks and does what the majority of men think and do. We have, then, a situation where statistics are an ersatz for theology. If the majority of men act in a certain way, this way of acting cannot possibly be meaningless and worthless. We might formulate the first commandment of modern man in this way: "Don't be different, adjust yourself," as opposed to the biblical command, "Do not conform yourself to this world."

How is this loss of trust experienced? It is total. It concerns the entire, old world of traditions, authorities and values, the entire western culture. Hence we have the attempt on the part of the Beatles and the Hippies to seek new foundations in the Far East and oriental mysticism, and the interest of some Western intellectuals, too, in Zen-Buddhism and in Yoga.

Because of the loss of trust in the religious sphere, no tradition and no institution can tell us how to live, be it in our profession, in educational matters, in marriage, or in the use of our leisure. With the loss of trust in the religious sphere, there is a concomitant increase of confidence in the secular sphere. As Goerres points out, the farmer once had to pray for rain. Today he can pay a pilot to inject sodium iodide crystals into the atmosphere to make it rain. Man obviously tends to trust in himself and to forget God.

III. The Failure of Christianity

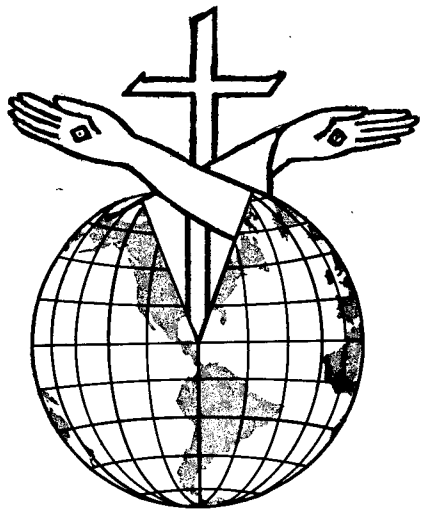
Modern man feels that God has handed him over to his own sinful nature. It appears that the means to salvation which the Church offers are ineffective; they neither satisfy nor heal. We see this motif expressed in Beckett's play **Waiting for Godot.** Beckett uses Christian imagery throughout the play. There are constant references to the cross, to salvation and damnation, and even to Christ. But these Christian images lack power. Beckett says more about the cross than most Sunday sermons do, and yet it is now a cross shorn of any salvific power. Modern man has the unconscious, inexplicable feeling that Christianity has failed. He has the sneaking suspicion that God has handed him over to his own sinful nature. For this reason people exclaim in confession, "I've fallen into the same rut again." It appears to some people that grace and good will do little to overcome concupiscence and the thousand and one miseries mortal man faces.

Does not the average Christian react in much the same way as unbelievers react — in the face of life, its difficulties, and its problems? Does the Christian faith give more zest and zing to life and living? Does Christianity help one carry the burdens of life with a smile? Does the Christian distinguish himself from the unbeliever in the quality of his love, or through his striving for perfection? Is it not possible to chalk up large areas of atheism as "disenchantment with Christianity"? The answers to these questions appear to underscore the conclusion that Christianity has failed.

Is the answer any different if we turn our attention to Catholicism, considered as a "species" of Christianity? Are the Marxists not correct in their belief that Catholicism has not concerned itself sufficiently with man's temporal needs? Have not past theologians made a dichotomy between heaven and earth, between the Church and the world? Why, for instance, did not the Church really begin to fight for the poor people and for racial equality fifty years ago? Does what the Church offers, taste of warmed-up Christianity, which smells of the fashionable past, which awakens no enthusiasm in the heart of man, and which offers little hope for the future? Has not the Church adopted a negative stance (1) toward natural science — e. g., the case of Galileo, the evolutionary theories of Darwin, and the ideas of Teilhard de Chardin; (2) toward S. Freud and psychoanalysis; (3) toward form criticism in the field of scripture studies? Does it not take the Church decades to adjust to new situations and realities? In short, does it not look as if Christianity has, at least in part, failed?

IV. The Future of Franciscanism

It does not seem justifiable to draw the conclusion, from the foregoing reflections, that there is no hope for Christianity. Why? Modern man desires to see the features of Christ in our world. Many people realize that they have lost a great source of enrichment



from their lives with the loss of the experience of Christ from the world. With the disappearance of Christ-like men, the thermometer of sympathy and kindness has dropped below the freezing-point in this jagged world we call our own. Modern man has a strong desire to see the characteristics of Christ in the world. There exists a strong yearning in man's heart today to seek out and find men who present and incarnate the figure of Christ. Witness the effect of men like Albert Schweitzer, M. Gandhi, or the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. There exists, then, a widespread openness and receptivity for Christian values and men who embody these values. Perhaps the living Christian is the only Bible men of today can read.

Here, certainly, is where we Franciscans come into the picture. If men of today can discern in us the features of Christ, tons o respect, love and gratitude will fa right into our lap. The vocatio problem will no longer be a pr blem. We need only to bear wi ness to Christian values, to pea love, joy, gratitude, and the brot erhood of all men. Enthusia generates enthusiasm, love beg love. Franciscans should have difficulty attracting followers; n should they have trouble drawi men to the Third Order. Th exists many a man today, anxi to deepen his interior life, w will readily do a distance with friar.

Franciscans have not been intellectual giants of the Chu in recent years; nor have t won renown for their liturg piety. They have been known be very human individuals, h ever, at least if I may judge f my small world of interpers contacts. In fact, it was the s humanness of the Franciscans t attracted me to join their ra The Franciscans I know h hearts of gold, despite any o shortcomings their flesh is heir It is precisely this humanne the Franciscans which will d other men to Christianity in future. Perhaps Franciscans ar very human because they've ways tried to imitate Christ i humanity. Saint Francis hi tried to imitate the human Ch he emphasized the virtues of erty, humility, and obedienc was filled with zeal for the Land, for the mysteries of Lord's birth and passion. All thoughts drive me to one

capable conclusion: that to the extent that Franciscans succeed in becoming faithful imitators of Christ in his humanity, to that extent will Franciscanism have a future.

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Book Reviews

Celibacy: The Necessary Option. Edited by George H. Frein. New York: Herder and Herder, 1968. Pp. 176. Cloth, $4.95.

Celibacy and Community. By Thadee Matura, O.F.M. Trans. Paul J. Oligny, O.F.M. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1968. Pp. 128. Cloth, $3.95.

Reviewed by Father Julian A. Davies, O.F.M., a member of Holy Name Province presently completing his studies for the doctorate in philosophy at Fordham University.

The papers in Fr. Frein's volume have already received a fair share of publicity, for they constitute the principal speeches given at the Symposium on Clerical Celibacy held at Notre Dame, Sept. 6-8, 1967, under the aegis of the National Association for Pastoral Renewal (cf. **America,** 9/23/67). Two of the papers have appeared in print before: Fr. Fichter's chapter on priests' opinions on celibacy (**National Catholic Reporter,** 12/12/66), which also appeared as chapter 8 of his **America's Forgotten Priests: What They Are Saying;** and Dr. Francoeur's chapter on clerical marriages, published as "Trial by Laicization" under the pseudonym Peter Declan in **Commonweal** (12/8/67) and answered deftly and thoroughly by Edward Heston in the same journal (3/22/68). Most of my comments will refer to the other papers.

Although clerical celibacy is examined from historical, psychological, theological, and scriptural viewpoints, not one of the papers raises a doubt as to the validity — pastoral, psychological, and theological — of the status quo. The very first essay is entitled "Optional Celibacy: A Key to Pastoral Renewal," yet it fails to connect in any clear fashion the two topics. The history of the married clergy in the Eastern Church reveals to the reader, if not to the author, that the tradition regarding priests who marry in orders is that they give up their ministry. The theological argument for "optional celibacy" attempts to show that there is no affinity between celibacy and the priestly ministry, as the popes have alleged, because the concept of ministry is radically different from what it has been supposed to be. R. J. Bunnik, who argues this position, seems to have embraced what an Anglican contributor, J. V. L. Casserly, has christened the "low doctrine of ordained ministry," as the Protestant reformers had done in their eagerness to promote a "high doctrine of laity."

The scriptural exposition of Ignatius Hunt, O.S.B., shows, as does the theological exposition of Bunnik, what no one ever doubted: that celibacy and the priesthood are not intrinsically connected. The appeal to 1 Cor. 9:14, where Paul speaks of having a right to a sister (wife) like the other apostles, seems forced. Even more forced are the frequent citations of the Pastoral Constitution's statements on the inalienable right to marry as supporting the claim for optional celibacy. The effort would strike one as ludicrous, if it were not so tragic.

Another item that rubs against the grain is the frequent reference to priests who, inspired by the Holy Spirit, desire the sacrament of matrimony, as if such a desire were on a par with the wish to start a new religious order or apostolate.

One of the papers, "Psychological Reflections on Enforced Celibacy" suggests that the age for ordination be raised to 30, arguing that men in America are not ready, before then, for a life-time commitment. The experience of one large order whose members are not ordained until that age, and do live outside the seminary for years, does not make this solution very plausible.

Is there anything of value in the work? The introduction by George Frein is a handy summary of public discussion of the question. The recognition that celibacy is possible only through **community,** is of more importance. The best suggestion, perhaps, is that the restraint of love experienced by many priests may be due not to the law of celibacy, but to their refusal to remove neurotic hindrances to celibacy and to grow into men who are unafraid of love.

Interesting in parts, frequently irritating, and never persuasive, just about sums up **Clerical Celibacy: The Necessary Option.**

The thesis of Fr. Matura's work is that the essence of the religious state is constituted by celibacy for Christ. Such celibacy, he argues, is the only one of the evangelical counsels pointing the way to that unique form of life which is the religious state; for poverty and obedience are counsels for all Christians. Furthermore, the concepts of "special consecration," closer imitation of Christ, and surer means of acquiring perfection, are ambiguous modes of specifynig what is really real about the religious life. Although the classical view of religious life, which embraces these features as well as the traditional view of the triadic nature of the evangelical counsels, is incorporated in both **Lumen Centium** and **Perfectae Caritatis,** the manner of their inclusion is such that further development of a theology of religious life — a development focussed on celibacy — is not precluded.

In an all too brief and undeveloped section, the author raises several questions without proposing to give any defintie answers: Has the clericalization in religious orders of men resulted in making monks priests, and has the stress on celibacy in the Western Church made priests monks? Has the movement in religious communities to go beyond living the gospel to the exercise of a particular apostolate — and the growth of religious groups devoted to "lay tasks" such as teaching, nursing, caring for children, etc. — resulted in a confusion in what a religious is, and just what is his or her apostolate?

Fr. Matura's rationale of celibacy as the eschatological sign of the kingdom of the future, which needs no justification other than that, is the high-point of the book. His insight into the all-embracing, loving embrace to which every Christian community tends, is movingly presented; and his characterization of every specifically religious reform as a "return to the Gospel" rings true.

To my mind two defects mar this thought-provoking book. First, the author assumes that explicit mention in the New Testament is the sole criterion for establishing that a teaching is revealed. Time and again, he argues, since the references to poverty and obedience **in the New Testament** are either directed to all Christians or to the particular person to whom Christ is speaking, they cannot be said to be revealed evangelical counsels on a par with chastity, which is clearly referred to in the New Testament as a counsel for some Christians. Secondly, in saying that the genital union of man and woman is the customary [sic] human encounter, and that man's sexuality is the dynamism of every human relationship, Fr. Matura seems to adhere to a Freudian-like psychology which does not accurately reflect human experience. One starts to wonder whether it might not be his concept of sexuality, rather than biblical scholarship, which makes him see celibacy as the essential constituent of the religious state.

These defects notwithstanding, any serious attempt to develop a theology of religious life will have to take into consideration Fr. Matura's **Celibacy and Community.**

The Underground Church. Edited by Malcolm Boyd. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1968. Pp. x-246. Cloth, $4.95.

Listen, Pilgrim. By Christopher William Jones. Milwaukee: Bruce, 1968. Pp. xiii-134. Cloth, $3.95.

Reviewed by Father Geoffrey F. Proud, O.F.M., a doctoral student in English at New York University. Father Geoffrey, a member of Holy Name Province, has taught English at St. Bonaventure University.

The subtle movement of Christians of good will in search of the freedom and religious flexibility projected by the documents of Vatican II which has been gathering momentum for the past five years has, paradoxically, surfaced in response to the name "underground church." In April the "underground church" held a public and advertised convention in Boston which was reported on the front page of the New York **Times.** And two books published last spring expose its posture and activities.

Malcolm Boyd put together one of them, **The Underground Church,** which he accurately describes as "not in any sense a formal collection of academic treatises... [but] rather a combination of exploratory and highly individual statements" (vii). The other consists in the reflective outpourings of a self-identified new Christian vagabond by the name of Chris Jones — **Listen, Pilgrim.**

Of Fr. Boyd's collection of essays and prayers, some had already appeared in religious journals while others were prepared at his request specifically for this volume. Taken together they do not present an integrated definition of the "underground church" movement. Only a few address themselves directly and speculatively to this phenomenon. Many are simply narratives of the writers' experiences in Christian activities outside institutional structures. For example, Fr. James Groppi writes an apology for his continuing demonstration for open housing legislation in Milwaukee which is also a severe though tempered criticism of the Church's failure in this important matter. Sharon Murdoch, a college student and volunteer in a poverty program in rural Virginia, offers a moving and beautiful account of the spiritual renewal she found in her work.

The contributions of Layton P. Zimmer, David Kirk, and George Hafner are among the best of the collection for describing the liturgical-community experiment which the book's title suggests. Theologian John Pairman Brown provides a link, perhaps, between the humanitarian and liturgical aspects of the movement when he explains that "the function of the Underground Church is to define the Peace and Freedom movements as the true Church" (p. 39), and the members are able to find strength for this task in their Eucharistic communions.

The writers of these essays are under no illusions about the inherent precariousness of the "underground church." They warn of the danger of being drawn into a non-transcendent secular humanitarianism, of operating at odds with structured authority, of lacking a definition of family life as Christian. They are uncertain too of the future of the "underground church": Will it surface fully and coalesce with the Established Church? Or will it pursue its subterranean course and discover new paths and new forms?

In truth, the "underground church" is not **underground** in the sense of the Catacomb Church nor of the Catholic Church in Elizabethan England, awaiting the day of emancipation from an oppressor. More precisely it is a Protest Church or a Third Party Church which can never become viable of itself. Rather its new ideas and proposals will eventually be recognized as valuable, exonerated, and incorporated into the established structures. This is the most any non-violent reform can hope for.

Chris Jones' book is far less engaging intellectually than Fr. Boyd's. In its sincere enthusiasm it offers an example of the theological disorientation which is affecting many, many genuine young Christian people who feel alienated from the established Church. Typographically it imitates the writings of Michel Quoist; but in its anguished appeals for Christian brotherhood, it seems to fade into a kind of Transcendentalism in which not the good impulses of mankind are identified with the Divine Over-soul, but rather the base:

> you are a teenager, you are a middle-aged woman,
> you are a tax collector,
> you are a whore,
> you are my God. (p. 35f.)

When the good soul of Chris Jones develops a more mature and stable Christian spirituality (and I suspect that it will if he adheres to the Cross of Christ which he so often speaks of), I think he might consider this first publication — barring, of course its spirit of deep humility — deserving of retraction.

Interior Prayer: The Exercise of Personality. By Johannes Lotz. Trans. by Dominic B. Gerlach, C. Pp.S. New York: Herder and Herder, 1968, Pp. 255. Cloth, $5.95.

Reviewed by Dr. Hilda Graef, the well known author and translator of spiritual and patristic literature. Dr. Graef's article on Gregory Palamas appears on p. 323 of this issue.

A modern book on meditation defining its essence and giving advice on how to meditate is greatly needed in our time, when mental prayer, too, must be brought up to date and has to be freed from antiquated methods. But the present book

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gives little help towards this, though it seems to want to do so. I say "seems" advisedly, for I am finding it extremely difficult to make head or tail of it.

True, the translation is bad throughout; for what is one to make of sentences like: "We will outline several steps that are to be passed through, but they do not always appear as such in meditation" and of metaphors like "our expectation can stretch out its arms"? But it would have been a superhuman labour to transform the author's German even into remotely intelligible English, and after perusing the work I hardly think it would have been worthwhile.

For apart from the general Teutonic unintelligibility of the book I have been unable to make out what exacty Father Lotz does mean by meditation. At times he seems to equate it with mystical contemplation, for example when he writes: "Meditation develops in the deep interior of the ground of the soul, and thereby above all in the transrational mode which is achieved by understanding.... Meditation penetrates into the transrational ground itself in such a way that this ground operates in its full power without being dissected by the rational."

Leaving aside the question how the "ground" can be said to "operate" (if this is the correct translation), it is the unanimous teaching of the mystics that the ground of the soul is the deep sphere in which mystical contemplation takes place, whereas meditation is the work of the understanding and the will.

On the other hand, however, the author calls "meditation" activities of the mind that have no religious content at all. He informs the reader, for example, that there "must be meditation on technology and technological vocations," without, however, giving any advice as to the way in which such meditation should be made. He mentions many other strange forms of meditation, for example, as a cure for boredom in marriage "husband and wife have to penetrate each other by meditation according to the way each has been shaped by his world." There are also sections on meditation on pictures, on architecture, on music and even on "meditation as a dance."

Personally I did not find samples of meditation on certain religious subjects such as the Our Father and the Sacred Heart particularly helpful, least of all the meditation on **The Cross Alone** which begins: "It is man's fate that he is a man. For according to his anatomical structure man himself is a cross, and, strictly speaking, **a twofold cross.** By using his head and torso to form the vertical line he can form the first cross by stretching out his arms away from his body, and he can form the second cross by similarly spreading out his legs. In meditating on the cross man therefore meditates on himself according to the way he is bodily constructed."

According to the blurb the book "enjoys a lucidness and clarity that less refined studies necessarily lack." At the risk of being myself "less refined," I cannot concur with this judgment.

A Theology of Proclamation. By Hugo Rahner. Trans. Dimmler, Dych, Halpin, and Petrick; New York: Herder and Herder, 1968. Pp. 216. Cloth, $5.95.

Reviewed by Father Zachary Hayes, O.F.M., Dr. Theol. (Bonn, 1964). Fr. Zachary has contributed reviews to Speculum *and the* Homiletic and Pastoral Review, *has been Professor of Doctrinal Theology at St. Joseph's Seminary, Teutopolis, Ill., since 1964, and Guest Instructor in Theology at St. Bonaventure University during the past three summers.*

The originl German of this book was published in 1939 under the title **Eine Theologie der Verkündigung.** Together with similar writings by Jungmann, Lakner, and Dander, it provides a clear example of the efforts made during the 1930's to develop a kerygmatic approach to theology. The men involved in this movement were concerned not merely with the **verum** in theology, but also with the **bonum praedicabile.** Whatever might be said of their efforts, we must admit that they called attention to the fact that the then-current school-theology showed too little concern for the needs of preaching.

Rahner's approach is dominated by a concern for the centrality of Christ and the Trinity. Because of his background in the history of theology, he is able to present certain insights that are still of significance today. This is true especially in the treatment of the humanity of Christ and the meaning of the **imitatio Christi.** But throughout the entire book, there is a rather obvious apologetic tone directed against Mensching which leads frequently to an excessive concern with the formulae of faith.

On the whole, the book clearly betrays the state of theology of the period during which it was written. It is obviously dated. Much has happened in theology in the intervening thirty years. We have not been able to find the original German to compare it with the English text, but the text of the translation is so clearly out of date in so many areas that we feel safe in saying that little if any attempt has been made to revise the original. One need only read the treatment of original sin to sense this. And when we think of what has happened in the field of Christology, ecclesiology, and sacramentology, it becomes clear that a thirty-year old book leaves much to be desired, even though it contains some valuable insights from past history.

We feel that the primary value of this book would lie in its possible use as a reference volume for those who are interested in studying the efforts of the Kerygmatic School of the early part of this century.

Teilhard and Personalism. By André Ligneul. **Teilhard and Womanhood.** By André Devaux. Trans. Paul J. Oligny, O.F.M., and Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M.; New York: Paulist Press, 1968. Pp. 82 and 83. Paper, $0.95 each.

Reviewed by Minna Cassard, an officer and director of The American Teilhard de Chardin Association, Inc. An Anglican, Mrs. Cassard is the wife of a retired naval officer.

Among the thousands of books and articles that have been published on Teilhard is a series of excellent small paperbacks called the **Carnets Teilhard,** sponsored by one of the Teilhard Associations in Belgium. Now two of the most interesting are available in English.

The author of **Teilhard and Personalism** starts out by saying, "The human person is the focal point of contemporary concern." He then goes on to state that "the pages which follow have no other ambition than to give the reader who is not indifferent to the lot of man a zest to enrich himself by contact with two extremely prominent witnesses: Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Emmanuel Mounier." The contact is indeed enriching. Moreover, the book can be read with interest and profit even by those who know little of Teilhard and nothing of the French personalist philosopher Mounier.

Teilhard and Womanhood presents us with a preliminary essay on a fascinating subject about which many volumes will no doubt be written in the future. The author does not venture to discuss the feminine friends of Father Teilhard's middle and later years, or his copious correspondence with them, but limits himself to mentioning his mother, two sisters, and his cousin Marguerite (to whom the letters in **The Making of a Mind** were written).

These extraordinary, indeed heroic Christian women, together with the Blessed Virgin, formed the young Pierre's lofty ideal of feminine personality.

Quotations from Teilhard are abundant, many of them familiar to readers of his unpublished works, but all, alas, unidentified. The Teilhardian vision of love and fulfilment in the "transcendent Center" produces, as his writings so often do, an effect of levitation, lifting the reader, firmly seated on an earthly sofa, breathless to empyrean heights. The original French title of this essay describes its contents, **Teilhard et la vocation de la femme.** Sensitive readers will perceive that Father Teilhard's concept here discussed is not womanhood, what we as women actually are, what we know ourselves to be, what modern psychologists say we are, but what God calls us to become.

This last paragraph brings me face to face with a most distressing dilemma, the choice between courtesy and candor. As a guest writer in this Franciscan publication I do wish that I could give unqualified praise to the work of the two Franciscans whose names appear as translators. As a conscientious reviewer, however, I am afraid I must record, after comparing the French and English texts, that both books contain mistranslations, typographical errors, and other evidences of hasty preparation.

The End of Conventional Christianity

(Continued from page 322)

religious convictions and practices are held to be true and valid primarily because they were taught to be true and valid, either at home, at school, at church, or in the religious milieu in which a person grew up and to which he always belonged, and not because their truth and validity were grasped as a result of personal thought, personal experience, and personal conscience [p. 17].

A second chapter applies this analysis of "conventionality" more specifically to Christianity as a concrete historical phenomenon. Despite the author's protestation that his is a detached methodology, he proffers some harsh judgments on the Christian religion and orthodox adherence to it in monolithic fashion. The correctness of his judgment is a matter for the reader to decide, but what he says here is certainly being said all over the place these days, and this is a convenient compendium of it all.

Chapters three to five deal with the various factors which have conspired to undermine this "conventional Christianity": the progress made in the sciences (especially paleontology, biology, and psychology), the mechanization of human understanding of the world, secularization, biblical criticism, and the cultural revolution of the past few centuries. Particular emphasis is laid, in chapter five, on the development of modern philosophy as a "bridge" from the confident medieval approach to the contemporary crisis.

The ensuing three chapters are excellent presentations of the quest for authentic existence (Heidegger and Buber), the need for demythologizing (Bultmann), theological exclusivism (Barth and Gollwitzer), and the "correlative method" of Tillich.

The expertise of the author both in Protestant theology and in existential philosophy is evident on every page here, as he places these intellectual giants in both historical and theological context. His selection of texts and themes is extremely good, and the three chapters form a most enlightening, organic whole. The trouble is, they do not seem to be worked quite smoothly into the remainder of the book. Granted that the problem of God is fundamental to the crisis now faced by conventional Christianity, and that the author points this out, it still seems that he could have drawn more precise connections between the two subjects. As the book stands, it would be quite complete without these three fine chapters, which, on the other hand, could easily form a valuable treatise in their own right.

The ninth chapter resumes the book's main theme, as Christianity is placed in direct confrontation with other religions. The Christian religion is said not to have an answer to Judaism's reproach (Jesus has not proved to be the prince of peace who established the kingdom of God on this earth forever — p. 278), nor to that of Buddhism, which "never tried to propagate itself by forceful means" and which "has no discipline based on sanctions which threaten man's spiritual freedom and independence, and which constantly involve man in conflicts of conscience as a result of the exercise of force on the conscience," etc. (p. 279).

In the concluding chapter, Van de Pol lists six conclusions in which he seems to take too seriously the "death-of-God" theology, dismisses traditional concerns of the ecumenical movement as "tilting at windmills" since we have already reached a "post-ecumenical era in which the solution will present itself against the background of a new and responsible belief in God," as the idols (including the traditional Christian notion of God) collapse. He seems to suggest that this new belief will be placed, in Buddhist fashion and somewhat humanistically, in an immanent God enabling us to be fully human. But this is the great disappointment of the book: Like everyone else who is talking this way today the author offers no really concrete picture of the future of belief. It may, of course, be unreasonable to expect him to do so.

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The translation is generally adequate, but it is marked by some very poor rhetoric, and in general it betrays a European idiom carried over too literally into English. Surely, by the way, the translator could have found some synonym for the ubiquitous word "shocks."

The author, too, is guilty of some mechanical carelessness, the most egregious example of which is the identification of W. C. Smith (three times on p. 276) as W. C. Brown, despite the fact that the same author and book were correctly identified earlier in the book. More care could have been taken, certainly, in proof-reading the book: A whole line is repeated on p. 223, and among the many misprints are some which obscure the meaning of the passage where they are found.

The question this book raises is, basically, the same as that raised by Leslie Dewart's **The Future of Belief.** Can we bring ourselves to stand quite outside the framework of "conventional Christianity" in our effort to regain the pure gospel message? Can we bring ourselves to recognize as human structures and formulations so much of what we have regarded as literally divinely established and communicated?

It will not do, of course, to take up a position squarely within the traditional framework of conventional Christianity and proceed to refute Van de Pol's daring challenge without even seeing what it involves. But if we do take seriously his invitation to step outside that framework, then he himself has placed his finger on the very nerve of the frightening consequence: "What norm must be used to establish — without falling into error — where the borderline lies between the unchangeable core and the changeable exterior?" (p. 74). It is easy, and unfair, to fault the author for not giving an answer; after considering the evidence he has presented, only the most smug and imperceptive reader can go on denying that the problem exists.

The problem is not, moreover, one that can be relegated to the realm of "those esoteric and abstruse things theologians busy themselves with" while the rest of us go about the things that matter. It is a problem that has everything to do with our whole stance as Christians — with our spiritual life, for example, which is the way we conduct ourselves personally in relation to God and his Church.

I have questioned, elsewhere (THE CORD, 18:118), whether our contemporary world has, as Bonhöffer thought, really "come of age." But that it is **coming** of age is impossible to deny, in the sense that we, in our age, have attained a new kind and degree of self-understanding from which there is no retreat.

I would not care, on that account, to go on record as endorsing in completely positive and unreserved fashion the radical sort of re-construction of Christianity advocated by Van de Pol. But neither can I be sure that he is wrong. "What norm must be used . . . ?"

The agonizing truth may lie in Heidegger's characterization of man as "the question." Perhaps we shall have no "norm," from now on, with which to settle easily and comfortably the myriad doubts which go to make up our existence as "the question," but will have to make do with provisional solutions based on the contemporary degree of self-awareness we have reached. I can hardly expect the reader, on the basis of what has been said here, to assume docilely a stance of facile agreement. Yet it can be said, I think, that the failure to examine sympathetically Van de Pol's position and its supporting evidence — the failure to open one's mind at all to the possibility of his being right — constitutes the most wanton sort of dereliction of one's responsibility as a free and intelligent Christian in our troubled age.

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