

# BOOK REVIEWS

**THE ROSE OF SOLITUDE: A Love Poem—Sequence.** By Brother Antoninus. Doubleday, 1967. 125 pages. \$3.95.

Do not be fooled by its calm-sounding title—*The Rose of Solitude* is an explosive book. Brother Antoninus takes us on a spiritual journey which we will not easily forget. Beginning where his last poem left off in *The Hazards of Holiness*, he leaves his desert monastery and enters the world, fully confident that the sexual experience he has already encountered in the dream-worlds of his unconscious as the desert-religious has catharsized and prepared him for any real-life such encounters in the actual world. He learns quickly of his true vulnerability. A vulnerability, it turns out, not towards sexuality so much as towards femininity. He falls passionately in love with an Aztec Mexican woman (a professional dancer, divorcee and mother, very likely named Rose or Rosa), has relations with her, finds his way back to confession after the woman has set him the example first, comes to a personal spiritual epiphany through her humble and feminine example, senses his deliverance from his masculine sexual self into a masculine-feminine wholeness, and finally finds a resurrectional freedom in Christ and a true death unto Christ just as his beloved turns and leaves him for another. Each step of the way is charted in the heat of the emotion that provoked it. Here we have a sequence of poems entirely unique among those of modern poetry in its attempt and success at sustaining a dramatic action. This drama is not only highly sustained, but it is truly suspenseful in the tortuous excruciations which the wrought soul undergoes.

At a time when identity-crises are besetting people inside the Church and out, Antoninus puts himself right in the middle of one of the most tried and controverted of such identities, that of the celibate confronted by the creativity of woman. In the love that possesses him, he comes to identify with the overburdening passion of Christ in the hands of His persecutors. But as he begins to pursue his innocent beloved with his impassioned love, he is forced to identify himself not with Christ now, but with His crucifiers. Finally when he is no longer able to identify with either Christ or His persecutors, he comes to an acceptance of his own blessed humanity through the humble example of the woman who silently and femininely accepts herself as sinner but as redeemed also. And not only is his humanity blessed, but his Fall is also rendered Fortunate by Christ and by His instrument, the humble woman whose whole being femininely radiates the paradoxical theology of the mysterious Fortunate Fall. Through this all-important metanoia he finds his deliverance and the

solution to his identity-crisis: the celibate will be fulfilled by Christ if he knows enough to accept his utter humanity for all it is. Humanity is blessed—blessed not only by God, but even by the rest of Creation, symbolized by the birds of the air. It is a humanity which even in the act of sin enjoys a blessedness and nobility inconceivable to the unsuspecting earthbound mind of man.

The thematics of this extraordinary document deepen at every level of our reading. We find the customary prose-legend of Antoninus leading off the sequence. This legend, as with all of Antoninus' prose-legends, is intended in the vein of a modernized Jungian archetype which reveals the basic ur-situation of the poem for what it is. (That is, these legends do not tell the *story* of the poems, but reveal the poems' underlying archetypal patterns). Here we find a priest who flees the confessional from a woman who declares her love for a priest. He flees from fear of himself and his flight is towards his own death. (One reviewer thought that all the poems were therefore about a priest—even though "friar," "monk" and "I" are the referents throughout the sequence). Such flight is repressive and Pelagian. So how does the religious come to accept his full sexuality while remaining the celibate? Must he go overboard as this particular friar did? The friar's answer is No. The sequence itself is intended to provide the necessary catharsis that reveals the path of meta-noia and full sexuality. It is a catharsis in which the reader experiences, as through the process of elimination, that only God gives wholeness, and this in His own way and time, writing straight with crooked lines.

The technique and poetics of *The Rose of Solitude* are by no means secondary. This sequence is a very tight piece of work, many poems beginning with the same line that concluded the previous poem. Again we have the famous Antoninus clarion line straight from his San Francisco beat backgrounds—what may be called an "exclamatory syntax" of stark lines in the manner of his Whitmanian mystique of proclamation-poetry. These lines are meant to be shouted aloud—just as Antoninus does in his celebrated readings. They are direct, oftentimes clipped. His anglosaxonisms (for the depths of Hopkins and the sensuousness of D. Thomas) are masterful with power, many nouns taking over as verbs. When he goes into latinisms in his long didactic poem "The Canticle of the Rose," he does it because Latin is the language of his masculine rationale—which thereby puts the Anglosaxon into sharp focus as the language of his emotions. At the end of the sequence we find the Latin and Anglosaxon blend into a smooth diction, with even rhyme occurring. In fact it may be noticed that the few poems throughout the sequence in which rhyme is used are marked by such a synthesis of diction. Perhaps this hints at the style of Antoninus' future poetry. On the whole the lyricism of these poems enjoys the same sweep which the theme does—a crescendo of love, tenderness and heartening honesty.

Brother Antoninus no longer contents himself to meld the elements of his sensuous mystical vision with the San Francisco atmosphere of Jungified nightmarishness. Even this he has gone beyond. Never short of boldness, now he has projected himself squarely upon one of the hottest and most complex issues of our day. The Rose of femininity, he says, must be plucked. But not on the thorns of our own masculinity. Rather through the thorns of Christ Who has given the Rose and in Whom the Rose may be found. For religious it will be "The Rose of *Solitude*," but more importantly they will come to experience its full dynamism as highlighted in the title of one of the last poems, "The *Raging* of the Rose."

Timothy Mahoney, O.P.

*The war in Vietnam has incited what is probably this decade's most impassioned controversy. Recognizing the complexity of the debate, we present two differing views of the following position paper. Ed.*

**VIETNAM: CRISIS OF CONSCIENCE.** By Robert McAfee Brown, Abraham J. Heschel, Michael Novak. Co-published by Association Press, Herder and Herder, and Behrman House, 1967. 127 pages. \$.95.

On the evening of January 31, 1967 an ecumenical worship service was held in Washington, D.C. at the New York Ave. Presbyterian Church. The service, sponsored by Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam, consisted of meditations, periods of silent prayer and addresses. The purpose for uniting was to witness to peace and to share ideas and attitudes about Vietnam. The authors of *Vietnam: Crisis of Conscience* received the inspiration for their book from this service at which Robert McAfee Brown and Abraham Heschel offered meditations.

Following that service significant sentiments of dissent to the war flowed into the Protestant, Catholic and Jewish communities. Organizational cells were set up and are still working. The war itself has advanced through several significant stages. Escalation has continued, battles have been fought, an election has taken place but peace is still far off. Well, as far off, as the "other side" wishes it. For despite all the foreign escalations and home dissensions the government still maintains that the "other side" holds the key to peace. In the midst of all that has occurred by way of military, political and diplomatic changes the government's position remains the same. This book is directed against the rigidity of that position.

Another winter is here but the immediacy of these words from the Introduction to this book are as compelling now as they were when they were inspired:

The pages that follow grow out of our shared concern that our nation is embroiled in a conflict in Vietnam which we find it impossible to

justify, in the light of either the message of the prophets or the gospel of Jesus of Nazareth. We feel that our churches and synagogues have been unwilling to face the moral implications of that conflict. We believe that even those who have supported the United States intervention in Vietnam must come to grips with what the United States is actually doing to that nation. This book is a plea to all Americans—committed, hesitant, uncertain—to confront the terrible realities of the war in Vietnam, before it is too late.

Michael Novak's essay "Stumbling Into War and Stumbling Out" is the first of the three essays delineating the crises of conscience. Novak states, as clearly as he can from his committed position, the historical development of United States involvement in Vietnam. From this historical analysis he evaluates the moral dilemmas posed by involvement. He traces our involvement from our support in the French-Viet Minh fighting through our support of the Diem regime after the French withdrawal and the gradual build up of forces which escalated into the present conflict. The history shows that we stumbled into a conflict which many of our military and political leaders warned would be disastrous. And now that we are there, the impersonality of our fire power blinds us to evils we dare not admit. Is our technological attack on the people and terrain of Vietnam really better behavior than that of the elusive jungle fighters? The defense of our position is constantly changing. The least the American people can do, Novak says, is ask our government why we are staying there. Is it to block the establishment of a Communist regime in South Vietnam? Is it to block nationalistic expansion of China or to block the Chinese strategy of wars of liberation? Is it to give the South Vietnamese a separate political identity? If we are there for the sake of the South Vietnamese, what will be left when we are through? Novak concludes that the war has been escalated beyond a reasonable point and while immediate withdrawal is not possible he asks that "the nation which has initiated each new escalation of violence initiate the procedures of de-escalation, and as speedily as possible turn the nation of Vietnam, its internal dissensions, its long-suffering people, over to its own population."

It should be mentioned that Novak did not represent the American Catholic Bishops at the meeting of the Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam. Rev. John F. Cronin, S.S. Assistant Director, Social Action Department of the United States Catholic Conference spoke at the service at the request of Bishop John Wright of Pittsburgh. At that time Cronin's position differed from that of Novak's expressed here. In January, 1967 not one Catholic Bishop openly dissented from the government's policy. Now five Bishops have joined the ecumenical dissent and Bishop Sheen of Rochester has called for immediate withdrawal, a position far stronger than that of Novak, Heschel and Brown. While Cronin's position may have represented the silent Bishops in January, Novak

articulates a stand which has been adopted by Bishops who can no longer keep silent.

Rabbi Abraham Heschel lays bare the "Moral Outrage of Vietnam" in the second essay. Following the reprint of the meditation on Ezekiel 34:25-31 which he offered at the worship service last January, Heschel clearly states that a military victory in Vietnam is a moral defeat for the United States. The war has become its own end, he cries out, and we have accumulated horror upon horror. He reiterates Novak's request that the initiative for peace must come from the strong, out of a position of strength. Before it is too late the United States must create a climate of reconciliation.

In the concluding essay Robert McAfee Brown voices "An Appeal to the Churches and Synagogues." They must face the moral obligation of Vietnam by mediating and reconciling the misunderstandings and hostilities on both sides, by urging members to speak and act responsibly in the political and economic life of the nation, by supporting those members who do dissent, and by taking responsibility to speak and act corporately. Brown gives four reasons for the increasing anguish of Christians and Jews which compel the religious bodies to act: the questionable nature of the warfare, the continuing inconsistency between our stated aims and their actual consequences, the discrepancy between what we are told by the government and what we discover is actually taking place, and finally what the war is doing to us militarily, politically, economically and morally. Religious leaders must recognize the reality of this war, Brown says, and then organize Protestants, Catholics and Jews in an ecumenical action to compel the government to change its course. This requested new course must begin with an unconditional halt of the bombing of North Vietnam followed by a de-escalation of the war elsewhere. With these alterations of our policy before the world we should then accept the Vietcong at the negotiation table and begin relying on the resources of international organizations in the search for peace. If these objectives could be achieved through united action then that action should continue afterwards toward rebuilding Vietnam socially and economically.

The attitude of *Vietnam: Crisis of Conscience* is one of respect for the United States government and for all those of a different opinion on the war. Out of the depths of their own consciences they urge an immediate moral decision by religious people all over the country. The decision they urge is not based on facts alone. Rather, the facts evoke from a Judaeo-Christian conscience the traditional response of reconciliation. Whether committed, hesitant or uncertain, or all three depending on what the news of the day is, the reader of this book will have listened to respectable men tell why they made their decision and why they think he should join them.

Cornelius Walsh, O.P.

*Vietnam: Crisis of Conscience* is a short and largely biased work on one of the greatest problems facing our nation today. The authors, Brown, Heschel and Novak, feel that American involvement in Vietnam is immoral and appeal to the churches and synagogues to unite in a concerted effort to change our nation's policy.

In the first section of the book, Novak traces the history of the conflict and considers the motivations for our continued involvement. He documents the undeniable fact that American policies in the past have not been blameless and concludes that there is no good reason for our continued presence there. If our motive is opposition to communism or China it is mistaken, irresponsible and immoral. If it is concern for the South Vietnamese we should let them "fight their own battles" and "may the better party win." (p. 44)

Rabbi Heschel raises the discussion to a higher plane, a plane conveniently unrelated to the reality of the conflict. He addresses a highly emotional appeal to freedom-loving, compassionate Americans, an appeal which misrepresents the facts and exaggerates their religious significance. "To speak about God and remain silent on Vietnam is blasphemous." (p. 49)

This theme is picked up by Brown who insists that the churches and synagogues have a responsibility to speak and act corporately, to unite in protesting our involvement in Vietnam. He enumerates the familiar reasons why one ought to be outraged by the war and then, in the final pages of the book, becomes practical. To be effective religious leaders must "articulate a position that can command the support of 51 percent of the voters." (p. 88) It is more important that they be "politically effective" than "prophetically pure." (p. 89)

For whatever their reasons might be, in the "prophetically pure" sections of the book all three view communism through rose-colored glasses while they look with jaundiced eyes upon America's efforts to preserve freedom in South Vietnam. Concerning China's 1962 invasion of India, Novak says they were "restrained in their attempt to clarify a border dispute." (p. 22) Brown speaks of Vietnam as the "third great moral outrage of our era." (p. 65) Since the first was Nazism and the second American racism, Brown apparently can see nothing outrageous about the millions murdered by Stalin or the millions presently being murdered in China and Tibet. Both seem quite content to give communism a chance in South Vietnam.

They feel that the basic problem is human welfare and that communism is one solution offered to the problem. It is interesting to note that, while they often refer to such things as poverty, hunger and disease, they seldom mention freedom. It is also interesting to note that, while East Germany is doing a splendid job of providing for the material needs of its people,

it still must use concrete, barbed wire and mine fields to prevent them from fleeing to the West.

It is true, as they are anxious to point out, that Moscow is no longer the center of all communist activity and that many changes have occurred over the years, but communism is still essentially what it was twenty years ago, i.e., a tyrannical system of government which suffocates personal liberty. There are certain characteristics found in every communist nation, even in those which have evolved the most, which make communism an evil and inhuman solution to the problem of human welfare.

In the face of this tremendous evil and the horrible consequences it holds for the people of Vietnam, the authors suggest that we allow the nation to go communist. (pp. 45, 80) Brown decries those who would question his right to advocate such a course. "Nothing would be more fatal to a democracy than to succumb to the notion that its citizens must give unquestioning support to the policymakers." (p. 84) He is quite correct. Dissent as such is never unpatriotic, but it can be wrong on other grounds. It can be wrong when it involves holding out a hope to the communists that we will tire of the conflict and withdraw.

Negotiations and peace will come to Vietnam only when the communists become convinced of our determination to preserve the freedom of South Vietnam. Our nation has shown much restraint (perhaps too much) in attempting to convey this determination and her efforts have been largely negated by the harassing activities and writings of the war critics. If such dissenters, by their dissent, prolong the war; if, by their dissent, they inflict additional deaths and destruction on the people of Vietnam, then they are guilty of the very crimes for which they condemn our nation's policymakers.

Stephen Keegan, O.P.

**A MODERN PRIEST LOOKS AT HIS OUTDATED CHURCH.** By James Kavanaugh. Trident Press, 1967. 179 pages. \$4.95.

In this assembly under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we wish to inquire how we ought to renew ourselves, so that we may be found increasingly faithful to the gospel of Christ (Vat. II, *Message to Humanity*, par. 1)

Indeed, it was most hopefully in this spirit that Fr. James Kavanaugh was prompted to write his book. In the author's words this book was written . . . "not in bitterness, but in love, not in the anger of demolition, but in the challenge of construction." Yet one cannot help but wonder if the language of love has not undergone a drastic change in recent days, for despite Fr. Kavanaugh's statement to the contrary, a chafing bitterness curries all but a few paragraphs of this Star Chamber critique of the Body of Christ, i.e., the outdated Church.

The substance of the book surveys the problems which have made the Church outdated. Fr. Kavanaugh castigates in matchless rhetoric "canon law . . . which has long impeded the spontaneity of Catholic thought" (which, by the way, is presently undergoing revision), the demise of the Catholic layman who "prays in a world of medieval magic" (cf. *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, par. 7), the Church's view on Marriage, the Catholic school system, the Catholic parish, and the Church's position on birth control. Fr. Kavanaugh's chapter entitled "Confession and Mortal Sin" points to the widespread ignorance among Catholics of the true meaningfulness of confession. His disparagement of a "tailored recitation" of sins in the confessional without dialogue or goals for spiritual development is well put. There are other valid criticisms; nevertheless, his attitude of impatience and his simplistic approach to problems appears to abrogate against any depth of theological reflection. Furthermore, it often strikes one that Vatican II never happened. It is only referred to a few times and then in passing.

Fr. Kavanaugh is much akin to J.A.T. Robinson in his *Honest To God* of several years ago, not only in the sensational aftermath he gave rise to, but in his procedure as well. For example, Kavanaugh will make a statement such as: "God is not dead, Catholic theology is" (p. 73), and, then, almost in anticipation of a rebuttal hastily qualify it (as Dr. Robinson did). Apropos of his above assertion, Kavanaugh says what he means in a footnote located in the back of the book for those who bother to look it up. Even then, he accuses some of the Church's foremost theologians of fearing to state ". . . the essential conclusions that should courageously follow their speculation." And why? *simply because*: "Rome has made cowards of them all." Frankly, this is an exaggeration. Anyone who has read, for instance, Yves Congar's preface to his *Dialogue Between Christians* has seen an autobiographical account of a courageous, dedicated theologian, who, though held in suspicion, remained obedient to the Church only to see his intellectual convictions bear fruit in the decrees of Vatican II. Examples of such tactic are as frequent in the book as the case histories Fr. Kavanaugh uses to substantiate his accusations, all of which would melt the heart of a Spartan.

No one is questioning the sincerity of Fr. Kavanaugh; in fact, his sincerity is commendable in the face of the lackadaisicalness of many among both clergy and laity to implement the decrees of Vatican II, but a sincerity which identifies itself with one side of the coin is as "outdated" as *laissez-faire*. It is our hope that Fr. Kavanaugh will face his own call to the challenge of construction, and offer us, in another book, some solutions to the problems he has presented. If he doesn't, his good intentions are questionable.

Alan Milmore, O.P.

*Charles Davis' decision to leave the Catholic Church was one of the major news stories of 1967. The following review is of Davis' last work as a Catholic theologian. The second review discusses his most recent book.*

**GOD'S GRACE IN HISTORY.** By Charles Davis. Sheed and Ward, 1966. 128 pages. \$3.50.

This book is a collection of three interrelated lectures Charles Davis delivered at King's College, London, in honor of F. D. Maurice. The main purpose of this work is to investigate the development of secularization and of Christianity under the cooperative grace of God who is transcendent to both.

Davis begins his analysis of secularization with a discussion of the classical problem of distinguishing and relating the "sacred and the secular". The secular is within the realm of human understanding whereas the sacred is cloaked in the area of mystery. Even when the sacred is accepted, however, it is accepted as being transcendent. Thus, God is not a secular reality, but rather, keeps his mystery despite the revelation made and the communication given. He remains beyond man's understanding. The deepening of the secular understanding of man and the continuation of God's revelation, culminating in the Person of Christ, introduces a new element into history, Christianity, whereby the unity of the sacred and the secular is to become manifest. This high integration is not achieved by human resources alone, but must be achieved as a gift from God.

At this point, Davis discusses grace and its importance as a supernatural gift for man, who is created for ultimate unity with the supernatural. Rather than erroneously promoting a consecration or sacralization of the world, which would mean a cessation of the secular in favor of the sacred, the author distinguishes the term "holy" from sacred. In this way, the work of the Christian is seen to sanctify (make "holy") the world that is, to recognize and appreciate the value of the whole reality of the world and of human persons in their secular order and also to see them, as the objects of divine grace, in their higher integration in the ultimate destiny of man.

This Christian mission cannot be affected by compulsion, but rather by the development of a free, personal faith in response to the appealing truths of Christianity. To hope for the immediate replacement of the secular society by a Christian society would imperil the very conditions for the development of Christianity. There is a need to re-examine the mission of the Church in modern secular society in the light of its historical-sociological development, in its secular manifestations.

In this observation, the author recognizes the great stress on the Christian in developing a free, personal faith within today's secular milieu. Even with this tension, however, Davis sees this secular society as a neces-

sary stage in man's development and a season of grace for the Church, the necessary context for the achievement of Christian unity.

Jim Kennelley  
St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, Md.

**A QUESTION OF CONSCIENCE.** By Charles Davis. Harper & Row, 1967.  
278 pages. \$6.95.

On the last page of *A Question of Conscience* Charles Davis states that no book has ever been more his own. After reading the book no one can dispute Davis' assertion. From beginning to end the book is a detailed analysis of why he broke with the Catholic Church. He continually states that this decision is based on a loss of faith in the Church. He does not explicitly ask anyone to join him, but he does pose difficult questions for those who remain, particularly for those who have urged him to remain within the Church and work for reform.

He maintains that there is nothing wrong with the position of those who believe the total teaching of the Church and who wish to update it. But what about those who hold that today you have to be selective in what you accept as worthy Church teaching? Davis wonders how they can live this way. Regardless of how others feel, either he accepts all or he accepts nothing. He was raised to believe in the Church. The Church has been a part of his whole life, he has worked for the Church and existed within its structures. Now he finds himself in the position of not being able to accept the way the Church lives and what it does to people. Since he can no longer believe in the Church he cannot live what he considers to be a sham.

Davis divides his book into three parts. The first is concerned with his actual public break with the Church. He explains his background, which placed him in the English Church as a leading theologian, what his image was as a result of his position, what the break means to him in terms of his personal growth, and the part played by his wife in his actual departure.

The second section comprises the bulk of the book. It deals with the Church as the sign of Christ, the relationship of the Church to truth, love and hope, the Church in the Bible, doubts about the claims to divine foundation, the development of the papacy and papal infallibility. This section of his book concludes with Davis' explanation that faith is a personal commitment to Christ, and from this position flows Davis' treatment of present Catholic institutions and in particular the hierarchy.

The third part of the book deals with what Davis considers to be the prospects for the Church in the future. He maintains Christians will come to be communities of men relying on their charismatic ministers whose duty will be to maintain unity among these communities. Structures, as

we know them today, will pass away and all that will remain will be something functional, flexible and varied, according to time and place.

Charles Davis frequently says that he demands from himself consistency in both his thought and action. The book shows that Davis has seen himself well. The style is clear, logical, easy to follow and relentless. For all the personal revelation the book is not warm or personal but rather is rational, analytic and introspective. These characteristics make the book heavy reading but they are not faults. Davis has done what he set out to do—to give a carefully analysed explanation of what happened and why. It is as thorough and painstaking an explanation as any man could give of why his conscience impelled him to a course of action.

Thomas Hart, O.P.

**NEW DICTIONARY OF THE LITURGY.** By Gerhard Podhradsky. Alba House, 1967. 208 pages. \$6.95.

Is a dictionary to be read cover to cover? To do justice in reviewing Gerhard Podhradsky's *New Dictionary of the Liturgy* this reviewer felt obliged to go from "ablution" (the first entry) to "wine" (the last entry). He realizes of course that Gerhard Podhradsky never intended his dictionary to be approached in such a thoroughgoing manner.

The author is an Austrian priest who besides being a specialist in liturgy is also deeply involved in pastoral work as Director of Caritas for the Diocese of Vorarlberg. This pastoral concern is clearly evident in his highly practicable suggestions. He generally refrains from editorializing and is content to explain objectively an item or practice, together with its use in the liturgy, its history and symbolism.

The original German edition published shortly before the Council in 1962 has been revised in this new English edition. The liturgical advances of the Council and the post-Council implementation have been adequately incorporated.

This book provides a handy compilation, combining at once a sense of liturgical relevancy with respect and appreciation for the Church's rich liturgical past. It will serve as a useful tool for the pastor and interested layman alike.

Vincent Wiseman, O.P.

**VATICAN II AND YOU: The Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (sound filmstrip).** St. Paul, Minnesota, The Catechetical Guild, 1967. \$27.50.

The documents of Vatican II are at last introduced to the catechetical scene by way of the audio-visual technique. The Catechetical Guild has

begun a series which will eventually cover all of the work of the Council. Already available are series one, *The Laity*, and series two, *The Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*. In the medium of color filmstrips and recorded narration, the Guild makes an excellent though expensive presentation of the work of the Council fathers.

In the filmstrip, *The Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, extensive use is made of the works of Rouault, Chagall, Orozco, and Manzué, to mention a few. The entire presentation is of high caliber and, considering the artwork employed, seems geared to the adult audience. While the pictures are of great significance and masterpieces in their own right, I do not think that they would be accepted by a high school audience. The scenes of the early industrial era might unintentionally convey a note of out-of-dateness to the young adult. Only a sophisticated audience would grasp the full meaning behind the pictures and arrive at a fuller understanding of this Vatican II document.

Thomas Cunningham, O.P.

**THE VISION OF PAUL TILlich.** By Carl J. Armbruster. S. J. Sheed and Ward, 1967. 328 pages. \$6.95.

Paul Tillich saw an intimate relation between religion and culture: "as the substance of culture is religion, so the form of religion is culture." Father Armbruster takes for his task a penetrating study of Tillich's vision. In the process, the author unfolds just about every major idea in Tillich's thought.

Father Armbruster proves to be a very reliable guide to the theology of Paul Tillich. In seven chapters he exposes Tillich's theories on methodology, faith and religion, culture, being and God, Christ, the spiritual community, history and the Kingdom of God. The ideas tumble out with the rapidity of coins from a slot machine that has hit the lucky combination. In the first section of the chapter, Father Armbruster allows Tillich to speak for himself with only an occasional animadversion from himself. Each chapter concludes with an evaluation of Tillich's particular position. The footnotes also contain further judgments on Tillich from his critics and admirers. A final chapter sets the whole study in focus.

Among the many valuable assets of *The Vision of Paul Tillich* is Father Armbruster's contribution of texts from Tillich's early German writings not yet available in English translation.

Displaying a superb grasp of Tillich's mind and spirit, the author is a very kind, even benign, critic. His study can lead one to conclude that Tillich is a Protestant agnostic—though Father Armbruster does not say that himself. Tillich had a thoroughly Protestant pattern to his thought

together with a penchant for ontology. The combination led him to ask and answer theological questions from a strong philosophical basis. Paradoxically enough, the man so interested in ultimate concern left open the problems which ultimately concern all thinkers. By leaving them so open, as though no answer were possible, he betrayed at least a hidden agnosticism.

Father Armbruster has done a fine job of presenting Tillich's ideas although the presentation is more meaningful to one who has read Tillich already. Yet I felt he was bending over too much to fit Tillich in. Why Catholic writers do that is beyond me. Tillich never did appreciate that! But, in sum a good book.

Raymond Smith, O.P.

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/s/ Jordan Finan, O.P., Editor