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BOOK REVIEWS

THE HUMAN MYSTERY OF SEXUALITY. By Marc Oraison. Sheed and Ward, 1967. 180 pages. \$3.95.

Father Marc Oraison is, of course, one of the most well known Catholic writers in the field of personality development. He has applied his medical and psychological knowledge to many areas of Christian living: religious education—*Love or Constraint*, the development of love between young men and women—*Learning to Love*, and marriage—*Man and Wife*. *The Human Mystery of Sexuality* presents us with his fundamental view of the role of sexuality in human development and consequently is valuable reading for a better understanding of all his works.

In the first section of the book he relates sexuality to the basic conditions of our human existence: life and the desire among each kind of living thing for growth in its members; death, the ultimate destiny of the individual; personal identity and the fear of losing that identity; masculinity and femininity; and religious uneasiness. After a brief section on physiological aspects Father Oraison goes on to discuss psycho-sexual development according to psychoanalytic or Freudian theory. He next discusses sexuality in the life of the adult man and woman: its importance in human relations in general, its significance as a striving for union (while at the same time ultimately incapable of achieving perfect unity), its relationship to fecundity and the consequent dangers of contraception, its social dimension in marriage, and finally the distinction between being "sexed" and being "sexual." He completes the book with a series of reflections on the meaning of sexuality as illuminated by divine revelation.

My own reaction to the book was mixed. Father Oraison wants to establish the findings of the psychoanalytic school as the valid and necessary light for a Christian understanding of our existence as sexual beings, or perhaps it would be better to say, as "sexed" beings. He brings out the tremendous importance of realizing that our sex permeates our entire being. Whatever course of life we follow, our thinking, our working and especially our relations to others are all in the context of being sexed, either masculine or feminine. The fact that the insights of the Freudian school have brought great clarity to this area of life is, I think, undeniable, and I hope that the battle to gain acceptance for the Christian values of psychoanalysis, if not won, is at least over the chief obstacles.

The book implicitly presupposes, however, that psychoanalysis equals modern psychology, and this is not the case. The psychoanalytic school is

only one phase of modern psychology and not necessarily the most important one. Whereas it brings to bear its own particular insights, it also suffers definite limitations. David Ausubel in *Ego Development and the Personality Disorders* (Grune and Stratton, New York, 1952) presents a critique of psychoanalytic approaches to personality development, and perhaps a few quotes from this work will illustrate the danger of accepting Father Oraison's position as *the* psychological position.

Freudian theory has for the most part arisen from clinical investigation of adult neurotics. Hence its assumptions regarding personality development in infant and child must necessarily be subject to all the errors and distortions produced by forgetting, bias and the manifest impossibility of an adult retaining childhood experiences intact and untainted by interpretations derived from an adult frame of reference. (pp. 8, 9)

In the light of these criteria, Freudian concepts such as id, superego, oedipus complex, sequences of psychosexual development, life and death instincts, etc., constitute highly unsatisfactory systematic formulations for a scientific theory of personality development. (p. 9)

I make this point because I believe that in Father Oraison's book we have, not *the* mystery, but rather Freudian insights into the mystery of human sexuality. In this same critique, Ausubel explicitly states that he does not mean to disparage the tremendous contributions made by Freud and his followers to general psychopathological theory.

There is a second and more fundamental difficulty in the book, and that is the idea that there exists a basic incompatibility between the approach of modern science to reality and the more speculative approach of the philosopher and theologian. This notion is explicated several times in *The Human Mystery of Sexuality*:

No longer does man accept the myths of tradition and the symbolization of philosophy or religious faith as fundamental truths. Rather, his knowledge has its beginnings in exact and independent observation, and from there it advances toward an organized system, one entirely free of preconception and prejudice. (p. 9)

Irreconcilability is clearly inevitable between those who adhere to ancient systems of thought and those who principally following upon Freudian discoveries, recognize the lack of realism in the "perennial philosophy." Failure to see the mystery of sexuality at both the center and the origin of all possible reflection explains the lack of realism in the older systems of thought. (p. 142)

The result of this dichotomy, at least within the thinking of Father Oraison, is to place the explanation of human behavior solely within the competence of the empirical sciences, allowing revelation only a

subsidiary role of shedding additional light upon these scientific explanations. It is my belief that human behavior has its deepest meaning in divine realities, and that it reveals this meaning to us through our own natural experiences. What is important is that theologian, philosopher and scientist work for a coherent understanding at all levels, and not that one discipline claim the right of sole interpreter. The Council Fathers in the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* call for a "blending of modern science and its theories and the understanding of the most recent discoveries with Christian morality and doctrine." They further direct theologians, "while adhering to the methods and requirements proper to theology . . . to collaborate with men well versed in other sciences." (No. 62)

These criticisms are not intended to discourage the reading of Marc Oraison, but rather as an attempt to put into context the work of one of the great contemporary contributors to the stream of Catholic thought.

James Nuttall, O.P.

THE NUN: Sacrament of God's Saving Presence. By Most Rev. Gabriel Garrone. Alba House, 1967. 190 pages. \$3.95.

In these post-conciliar days, when Sisters everywhere are in the process of adaptation and experimentation, they must remember that effective witness is inextricably bound up with the living of the evangelical counsels, prayer, penance and the sacramental life of the Church. Modifications of the religious garb, of out-moded customs or community regulations can contribute to the fruitful apostolate of nuns only if they strengthen the interior life of the religious, make her daily more conscious of having been especially chosen by God for complete consecration to His service in love. The nun, just as much as anyone else, is a victim of self-deception if she envisions herself as an apostle to the modern world without having an ardent love of God and souls, a flame which can be enkindled only by the Holy Spirit in those who are open to His inspirations.

In this book of spiritual reflections, the Pro-Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities reminds the religious of her great opportunity to be a symbol of Christ, but "only if the reality is there behind the token," as he says in the first chapter on Vocation.

The book is intended as an aid to the Sisters in their monthly days of recollection, so the various meditations are grouped under the general headings of Vocation, the Interior Self, the Church, the Convent, the Calendar, the World, Trials and Promises, and a Conclusion in which the Sister's Role in the Diocesan Program and the Missionary character

of her vocation are stressed. It reflects the author's deep appreciation for the contribution of religious women to the life of the Church, his respect for their integrity and his paternal concern for their spiritual welfare.

The style is simple, high-lighted with frequent passages from Scripture and direct questions about duties and attitudes of the religious woman toward God, her neighbor and herself. The consideration of the soul as the first mission territory to be conquered provides a positive and novel approach to the constant conversion one needs to a more fervent spiritual life.

It would seem that the writer gave the talks to nuns before putting them into book form. Even if he did not, he has succeeded in writing like a spiritual father whose admonitions are gentle, and whose concern is truly Christ-like. This is the kind of book one can open at random, read a page or two in an atmosphere of recollection and receive the kind of practical suggestions Sisters need. It should help Sisters fulfill ever more fruitfully their role of revealing Christ to the world through their living presence in its midst.

Sister Eileen Marie, O.P.
(Caldwell Community)

THE POSTCONCILIAR CHRISTIAN. By Timothy McCarthy, O.P. With a foreword by Dorothy Day. P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1967. 142 pages. \$4.50.

When the decrees of Vatican II affecting the life of the laity were published, many Americans were caught off guard. Priests found themselves relegated, it seemed, to being mere "sacrament-machines," charged with the occasional administration of a few sacraments and that is all. The laity, on the other hand suddenly discovered they were called through their own priesthood to carry on much of the work which used to belong strictly to priests. With his usual gift for clarity, Fr. McCarthy has written this study to help both bewildered parties understand their own calling and special tasks in the Church.

In this book, he explores the background and theology of the priesthood shared by all Christians. He then delineates the differences between the laity's own priesthood and the sacramental priesthood of the Church's official ministers. Three concluding chapters indicate ways in which the lay person can fulfill his priestly tasks in the Church and the world. These chapters are based upon the imitation of Christ, the prophet, king and priest.

Fr. McCarthy does not stop at mere clarification of the decrees affecting

the priesthood of the laity. Besides a simple explanation of the European theological thinking behind the decrees, Fr. McCarthy adds his own insights. Particularly good contributions are his notion of the priestly dynamism of grace itself, of baptism as the origin of the "directional" sacrifice of the entire Christian life (back to the Father) and of exorcising our environment.

This book would make an excellent gift for both laity and priests alike. It will hold interest for professional theologians as well. For Fr. McCarthy has a special ability in writing in distinct language, while at the same time, avoiding the sacrifice of his own personal depth.

David Thomasma, O.P.

METHODIST OBSERVER AT VATICAN II. By Albert C. Outler. Newman Press, 1967. 189 pages. \$4.50.

As a delegated observer at Vatican II, one of Dr. Albert Outler's functions was to keep the Methodist Church informed on the progress of the Council. He also found time to write and lecture to other interested groups on his impressions of a Church in Council. *Methodist Observer at Vatican II* is a partial collection of such reports. The reports are given in the order they appeared, stretching over the four years of the Council, neither touched up nor re-edited for this book. One thus shares with Dr. Outler the tensions, hopes, disappointments he felt at a particular phase of Vatican II's unfolding, when one did not know where it all might lead.

Outler's reflections on the *Religious Liberty* schema are an interesting case in point. The floor debate and back-room maneuvering between Conservatives and Progressives carried through all four years of the Council. No other issue was more indicative of Vatican II's commitment to ecumenism than this schema; if it were side-tracked or voted down, all the old Protestant bromides about Roman triumphalism and intolerance would surface again. The reader senses Outler's anxiety each time voting on the schema was put off, and his reporting of the November 19 parliamentary blocking of the vote (during Session 3) is a highlight of the book.

Outler brings an enviable balance to his reporting as well as a sensitivity in understanding the complexities of the conciliar process. He sees Vatican II as a "Reformation Roman-Style," whereby the Church seeks to reform her present structure while maintaining continuity with her rich tradition. Throughout his reporting Outler remained ever the optimist that the Progressive camp would prevail in the strategic issues, as it so clearly

did. At the same time he sensed the genius of Pope Paul in fostering the Council's outcome without alienating the Conservative forces.

This book is not a day-by-day account, and it is frequently repetitious since one at times is reading reports of the same session given to different groups. But it flows smoothly, reads quickly and the famous Outler wit is never far from the surface. A chance to see Vatican II through the perceptive eyes of a Protestant ecumenist makes this book well worth our attention.

Jeremy Miller, O.P.

PRIEST AND REVOLUTIONARY: Lamennais and the Dilemma of French Catholicism. By Peter N. Stearns. Harper and Row, 1967. 209 pages. \$5.95.

"Not all the prophets of the house of Israel have perished in the ruins of our temples. . . . The cause of God has found once more a defender worthy of it." (p. 59) That defender was Hugues-Félicité Robert de La Mennais—at least for a time, that is. Peter Stearns writes of the premature birth of liberalism within the French Church and of its first key figure, Lamennais.

The author sees the years 1830-1834 as years of crisis. The leading churchmen looked to a restoration of privileged status for the Catholic religion. Lamennais was one of the few clerics to recognize that society had changed irrevocably, and he was one of the most vocal in advocating that the Church adopt the principles of the Revolution. The Church would never win back the people except by espousing the cause of liberty, nor would the liberals establish a stable society without accepting the Church as the guarantor of rights and obligations. But by looking back on her immediate history, the Church only committed herself more fully to the Old Order, and Lamennais' singleness of purpose inevitably drove him out of the Church.

Peter Stearns has produced a remarkably balanced account. There are neither heroes nor villains. For the clergy generally, the American notion of separation of Church and State was quite simply inconceivable. Lamennais, on the other hand, was both spurred on and held captive by his prophetic vision. So many of his attitudes are those of Vatican II and yet they were to remain unacceptable and unrealizable for more than a century, until both the Church and society at large had come a good distance from the atmosphere of the 1830's.

A multitude of factors went to make up "the dilemma of French Catholicism." The author has chosen to analyze this period in terms of general trends and of the attitudes held by the major parties involved.

The remarkable feature of this approach is that it conveys the complexity of the situation without being complex itself. There is a drawback, however, in that the principal characters tend to get overshadowed by their ideas. Fortunately the author has appended a number of excerpts from Lammenais' writings and the texts of the encyclicals condemning him. This gives us a little of the personal color that is lacking in the body of the essay.

The Church is always entering upon a new age with Divine and human traditions of preceding centuries. In many respects *aggiornamento* meant something different in the 1830's—a strong central authority in Rome, for one thing—but both the average priest or layman and the would-be prophet will find Peter Stearns' study interesting and very readable.

Matthew Rzeczkowski, O.P.

THE LIFE OF ERIC GILL. By Robert Speaight. P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1966. 323 pages. \$6.95.

In many ways Eric Gill was a man far ahead of his own times—and in others, far behind them or at least hopelessly out of tune with them. Today, his frank appreciation of sex and marriage (almost erotic in emphasis), his concern for authenticity and naturalness, his understanding of the role of the workingman, all these things appeal to us. Yet his radical and active antipathy towards the Industrial Revolution, his constant praise of the medieval epoch and his ultra-logical, though rather simplistic, approach to reality are not qualities calculated to endear him to our generation. These facets of his person estranged him from many of his contemporaries, in fact. Thanks, however, to the able pen of Robert Speaight, Gill emerges as the great man, artist and Christian that he was, in spite of his limitations.

This is probably *the* biography of the eccentric and lovable Gill. All the varied controversies of his life and loves are examined and dealt with fairly, yet in a style that presupposes a great deal of information about the background and times, especially the English intellectual Catholicism of the 1930's. This book is not for everyone. But those who know something about Gill and want to know more—about his genius, holiness and also about his very human defects—will find reading this book a rewarding experience.

Giles Dimock, O.P.

THE BIBLE AND THE ORIGIN OF MAN. By Jean de Fraine, S.J., Alba House, 1967. 85 pages. \$2.50.

This little book is concerned with three problems: the evolution of man, the age of humanity and the number of first men. Father de Fraine rejects any answers smacking of Concordism; rather, he is careful to explain that each problem can be approached from three directions (science, philosophy and religion). We should not be anxious to reconcile the Bible with the findings of contemporary science. The Bible is not teaching science; it is exposing the religious meaning of the events it describes. Hence, the natural sciences, philosophy and theology all discuss the origin of man, but each considers this same topic under a different formality.

The second section of the book is an exegesis of five Biblical texts: Genesis 1:26-28 (creation of man in the image of God); Genesis 2:7 (man formed from dust of the earth); Genesis 2:18-24 (Eve formed from Adam's rib); Romans 5:12-19 (sin and death entered the world through *one* man); Acts 17:26 (the whole human race is created from one man). The exegesis is detailed and balanced. Fr. de Fraine does not overextend the possible interpretations of the Biblical texts. He recognizes contradictions where they exist between Scripture and science, and he seems content to live with these contradictions until new scholarship suggests solutions. Consequently, he is unable finally to resolve the question of whether man has descended from only one father (monogenesis) or from several independent "first" parents (polygenesis). The most he can say is that the author of the Bible was not trying to teach us that the whole human race descends from a single man.

The final section is a consideration of the teachings of the Church insofar as they might shed light on the question of monogenesis. There is an explanation of the doctrine on Original Sin; then a very few words about the ordinary teaching of the Church; then, a look at the explicit Church statements on monogenesis. There are strong papal words discouraging those who would opt for polygenesis, but there is no outright condemnation of such a position.

This is a very useful little book in these days of new archaeological and paleontological data. I fear that its utility is restricted to those with a good background in scholastic philosophy; such distinctions as that between the material and formal objects of a science are not appreciated by the majority of people. Nevertheless, this is not a serious defect; it is those who have a good scholastic background who are in need of enlightenment on this problem of the origin of man.

I should not like to give the impression that this book is only a handy "book of answers" about evolution. It also invites theologians to develop the doctrine of Original Sin. It is important that we have renewed

theologizing in the light of new Scriptural teachings. If and when the natural sciences can offer more conclusive evidence for polygenesis, the Church's position should not be weakened by a dated approach to Original Sin.

Jordan Finan, O.P.

THE HISTORICAL JESUS IN THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN. By Franz Mussner. Volume 19 of *Quaestiones Disputatae*. Herder and Herder, 1967. 115 pages. \$2.50.

Sixty years after the death of Jesus and twenty years after the writing of the last widely circulated gospel a new gospel appeared. The gospel was written by an eye-witness who reliably reported what he had seen and heard. But the Christ who spoke in the pages of the new writing spoke a new language. The language was clearly that of the author John, the disciple of the Lord whose epistles enjoyed wide circulation among the Christian communities. In spite of its novelty the new writing was accepted by a critical Church as an authentic testimony to Jesus of Nazareth—who was accepted by all, in the terms of Peter, head of the Church, as the Christ, the Son of God.

Considering that the Church of the time was hypersensitive to errors about the person of Jesus, general acceptance of the new Gospel is remarkable proof of the reliability of the author. But it does not explain how the Johannine Christ accurately portrays the Jesus of history. For Franz Mussner significant insights into this Johannine problem are found by considering the situation in which the author was placed. Aided by the modern hermeneutical pursuits of Martin Heidegger, W. Dilthey and Hans-Georg Gadamer, Mussner asks how the fourth evangelist saw his subject Jesus Christ. What was the "mode of vision" that led to John's unique interpretation of Jesus?

Time is the first factor contributing to the Johannine Christ. During the sixty years between the death of Christ and the appearance of John's gospel Christian communities had been formed. These communities now flourished in environments which provoked various doctrinal controversies. The Gnostic-Docetist circles which questioned the identity between the historical Jesus and the heavenly Christ are an example of such environments. John's gospel is a new sketch of the life of Jesus prompted by the controversies. Following Gadamer, however, the author says that John's new interpretation does not falsify Jesus, for "a genuinely historical awareness cannot leave out of account its own present."

The second factor is the mode of vision by which John understands Jesus. To grasp this Mussner analyses six terms used by John which show how he interpreted Jesus. The terms are: "to see," "to hear," "to come

to know," "to know," "to testify," "to remember." The analysis includes the number of times each term is used in John against its usage in the synoptics and a full definition of the term often by showing its usage by Jesus, the disciples and the Pharisees. He concludes his analysis with this definition:

The Johannine mode of vision is that of a believing and informed witness who, in remembrance, "sees" his subject, Jesus of Nazareth, in such a way that the latter's hidden mystery becomes "visible" and expressible for the Church in kerygma. (p. 45)

"Vision" as an act of remembrance is the subject of a brief aside to this study. Here Mussner shows that the act of remembrance is "anamnesis" or "rendering present" a past event. What can be said of the Johannine anamnesis holds good for the biblical writing of history generally. The Old Testament representation of Israel's past is frequently described as "seeing" Yahweh's sacred deeds. The synoptics also write in this way. By remembering the words of the Lord Jesus they hope to beget faith in him.

John's anamnesis is distinctive because of the Jesus who is made present. But this is the conclusion of the book, and before spelling out this conclusion Mussner returns to his analysis and considers three more factors contributing to the Johannine Christ. They are tradition, the Paraclete and the disciple's own love for Jesus. The Paraclete teaches and is not only a guardian of the truth. With the tradition as a foundation, the Paraclete guided John to portray the Jesus of history and at the same time to answer the critics of his own time. Because he loved his subject, he could penetrate into the mystery of Jesus and give expression to it in the gospel.

Mussner concludes by saying that the uniqueness of the Johannine Christ lies in the degree to which the historical Jesus is identified with the glorified Christ. The "actual Christ" is he who appeared in the world but did not remain in the world. This Christ who returned in glory to the Father continues to speak through the Paraclete in the Church and in the gospel. This speaking is so real in the fourth gospel "that the inspired mouthpiece of the glorified Christ, the sacred writer, lends him his tongue, so that Christ speaks to the Christian community in Johannine language."

The *Historical Jesus in the Gospel of St. John* is the work of a known scholar on the question of the historical Jesus. It is nonetheless a significant contribution to the question because of its brevity. Mussner presents his scholarship in only one hundred pages. The style is unusually readable considering the depth of scholarship and many references. For a brief but profound study of the problem of the Johannine Christ this book is highly recommended.

Cornelius Walsh, O.P.

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES EXPLAINED. By Prospero Grech, O.S.A.
Translated by Gregory Carnevale, O.S.A. Alba House, 1967. 151
pages. \$2.95.

Father Grech, one of the contributors to the English edition of the Jerusalem Bible, shows the significance of the most important book of the new Testament outside of the Gospels, *The Acts of the Apostles*. He points out how St. Luke teaches the universalism of the Christian Church.

The manner of presentation of Father Grech is extremely clear. At the end of each of the twenty-eight chapters (which correspond to those of *Acts*) the reader is further aided with numerous annotations: explanations of certain difficult phrases, identifications of various persons and pagan gods, descriptions of different religious rites and political functions. The greatest assets of this book are its clarity and its wealth of information.

There is a great need for doctrinal commentary of *Acts* from the very fact that over 25% of it consists of discourses. Father Grech places the emphasis on the theological elements but also devotes time to the historical. He agrees with the opinion proposed in the Jerusalem Bible that the Council of Jerusalem described in Chapter 15 of *Acts* may have consisted of two distinct controversies instead of just one. This "twofold controversy" view is supposed in order to explain some of the discrepancies that exist between Chapter 15 of *Acts* and Chapter 2 of *Galatians*.

Father Grech has given us an excellent work, presenting the theological and the historical aspects of *Acts* in a style most understandable.

Christopher Allegra, O.P.

IN THE HUMAN GRAIN: Technological Culture and its Effect on Man, Literature and Religion. By Walter J. Ong, S.J. Macmillan, 1967. 202 pages. \$5.95.

If nothing else in this remarkable collection of essays and articles (which seems to pick up where Father Ong's friend, Marshall McLuhan, leaves off), we have a clear-cut delimiting of the tension between cyclic and open-ended—a starting-point for further reflections on man, literature and religion.

Father Ong shows how the cyclic is embedded in our Western consciousness, but that the 20th century Christian experience is essentially scriptural, Darwinian, open-ended, that of a pilgrim Church. Furthermore, to Father Ong Christianity seems anti-cyclic at the outset. Christian teaching underlines the unrepitiveness of actuality and the importance of the unique, unrepeatable human self, the human person.

Thus the Christian experience in contemporary literature is rare because the Christian expression is actual and open-ended, while the literary mentality remains mythical and cyclic. "Can it be," he asks "that the poet and artist generally feels himself on the outside because he has failed to make his own one of modern society's deepest insights, its sense of historical time and its drive into fulfillment into the future?"

Hopkins seems to have had this "deepest insight" of modern society, well in advance of his time, as Father Ong points out in a brilliant commentary on a section of *The Wreck of the Deutschland*:

Not out of his bliss
 Springs the stress felt
 Nor first from heaven (and few know this)
 Swings the stroke dealt—
 Stroke and a stress that stars and storms decline,
 That guilt is hushed by, hearts are flushed by and melt—
 But it rides time like riding a river
 (And here the faithful waiver, the faithless fable and miss).

Father Ong's own penetration in this book reminds one that (again from his favorite Hopkins) "mind, the mind has mountains." Climb them. Read his book.

Joachim Plummer, O.P.

THE PURIFICATION OF THE CHURCH: Five comments from New Blackfriars. Edited by Ian Hislop, O.P. London, SCM Press, 1967. (Available from Christian Classics, Inc., Westminster, Md.) 39 pages. \$.75.

As the title suggests, this little volume is an important collection of five editorials concerning the tragic McCabe controversy. The controversy was sparked by the editorial of Fr. Herbert McCabe, O.P., the first in this collection, and was fanned into a fire by the subsequent action of Church authorities. The issue at stake is not, as Fr. Ian Hislop indicates in his brief notice, Fr. McCabe's famous phrase "The Church is quite plainly corrupt." Nor is the debate about the examples he used in the article. Neither is it about the sad state of so-called "progressive theology" in England. The real issue is whether one may speak of the Church, the holy Church of Christ, as being in need of purification.

In an attempt to "demythologize" the controversy and set the record straight, the provincial of the English Friars Preachers, Fr. Hislop, has collected a set of articles, from Fr. McCabe's own statement, through Archbishop Dwyer's and Fr. Cornelius Ernst's, to Michael Dummett's question: "How Corrupt is the Church?" The attempt to clarify the issue is met with success, for the overriding concern which appears in reading

these stimulating pages is the concern for the Church. What is even plainer than the Church's corruption, is the *love* of the Church prompting each of the writers. Without question, the Church is fortunate to have among its members those who recognize its failings, but who nevertheless do not wish to leave it in the lurch. And this determination is a testament of the faith of our English confreres.

As is well known, Fr. McCabe wrote his initial editorial in shock and anger at the decision of Fr. Davis to leave the Church. In his personal dissolutionment, McCabe used strong language in berating the "authoritarian structure" of the Church. Thus, the article was not directed to the "personal tragedy" which led Davis out of the Church but is pointed rather at the impersonal structure of the Church's life, a structure which often crushes individuals who are "other Christs." As McCabe avers: "We have lived with this truth so long, that we have forgotten how horrible it is."

However, the Church must have a structure. It does not consist in the non-theological guidance of the Bishops so much as in the personal guidance of other theologians, of the Catholic Press and of the private lives of the people of God. McCabe concludes, and this is the witness of his faith, that the dialectical tension between the "official" structures and the spontaneous ones must exist in order that Christian existence thrive. But there is no excuse for the "domination games" played by some authorities. Such games must be tolerated but also must be eradicated, "just as when we teach a child to grow up."

Although the American reader will sometimes be puzzled by the elaborate defense needed to justify the encounter of the Church with the modern world in England, he will be struck by the honesty and courage of the authors. What is most important to keep in mind in reading this packet of ideas is that the structured Church itself is not repudiated; it is the only way one is kept in contact with the broader human experience of past ages as it lived out the faith of Christ.

David Thomasma, O.P.

BARUCH SPINOZA, LETTERS TO FRIEND AND FOE. Edited by Dagobert D. Runes. Philosophical Library, 1967. 109 pages. \$3.75.

This small collection of letters selected from the last two decades of Spinoza's life presents a readable and useful introduction to his mature life and thought. It is perhaps symptomatic of our age that we can respond to this genius who was so neglected and attacked in his own age. Conditioned by linguistic and logical analysis, we are no longer dismayed by the more formal aspects of Spinoza's thought;

and we can read with great interest his attempts to lead his friends into the same awareness of an immanent deity, of the absolute power of reason and of the intrinsic value of virtue and freedom. Most of these themes are concisely expressed in the letters to Oldenburg, one of which contains his views on knowing and his memorable analogy of man as a worm in the blood stream.

Other letters center on Spinoza's religious convictions. His method of interpreting scripture was to read it as fiction or myth and ever subject to the exegesis of reason and philosophy. Anything mysterious or supernatural and opposed to reason was to be read in a literary and not a literal sense. This method disposes of such miracles as the incarnation or resurrection. Spinoza often has to defend himself against charges of atheism, and in some letters he identifies himself with the spirit of Christ while repudiating the myths and superstitions of Christianity. And the worst example of Christianity is Roman Catholicism, as his poignant letter to Albert Burgh explains.

Another strong conviction is his love for tolerance and political freedom. This follows from his eminent trust in reason and his fellowship with the Jews suffering in the Spanish and English persecutions. In one letter he contrasts his support of democracy with the totalitarianism of Hobbes. In general, this is a very fine selection of letters presenting not only the thought but also the life and convictions of Baruch Spinoza.

Henry Payne, O.P.

PRINCIPLES OF MORALITY. Translated by Thomas Gilby, O.P. Volume 18 (1a2ae, 18-21) *Summa Theologiae*. McGraw-Hill, 1966. 207 pages + xxi. \$6.75.

The tide of situation ethics, death-of-God theology, theology of secularity is running strong these days. And many theologians are writing the surfboard kind of books that ride the waves. This book is not a surfboard. It is more like a bathysphere built to help us observe what goes on in the depths. St. Thomas wrote it a long time ago but his insights into Christian morality are still penetrating, still useful, and in the hands of the right translator, still fresh. Gilby is the right translator.

For example: "In a human act we can observe a fourfold worth. The first is generic, namely its real quality as an action, for, as already remarked, to the extent that it has active reality to that extent it has good. The second is specific, and this is taken from its being directed to a proper objective. The third is according to its circumstances, which are as it were its properties. The fourth is according to its end, in other words, by its bearing on the ultimate cause of goodness (q. 18, a. 4)."

Gilby has achieved a technically sound English but without the Latinisms that haunt most translations of St. Thomas' works. The example Gilby offers in a footnote to help understand this passage is wonderful. "Thus a complete sexual act: 1. observes physical and psychological conditions; 2. takes place in marriage; 3. respects the decencies; and 4. expresses true friendship (p. 18, note i)." Respects the decencies. That phrase sums up the kind of translating Gilby does.

But why publish such a translation today? Isn't St. Thomas hopelessly out of date? Whatever would we have to say about situation ethics? Gilby has a strong conviction about the common sense of Aquinas and a strong hope that modern man will seek it out when he is surfeited (pardon the pun) with surfing. The 20th century is not the 13th; new and tremendous problems have arisen in our day; one cannot ignore Freud, Bonhoeffer, Van Buren or Fletcher. All true. But the *Summa* or, for that matter, Plato's *Dialogues*, Aristotle's *Ethics*, Shakespeare's plays or Dante's *Divine Comedy*—these books have given man insights into himself that he ought to remember. The *Summa* is not through yet. Surfboards have a glorious function, but the great books of our civilization lower us into the depths of the sea, into all the hidden crevices of man's heart. If we do not make room for such books we are in trouble.

Thomas R. Heath, O.P.

THOMISM: AN INTRODUCTION. By Paul Grenet. Translated by J. E. Ross. Harper & Row, 1967. 130 pages. \$4.00.

Why another manual on Thomism? In fact, this is not just another manual, since it is not a manual at all. Although written for beginners, this work by the professor at the Institut Catholique at Paris, is an excellent overview of the entire thinking of St. Thomas and Thomists in the areas of cosmology, anthropology and metaphysics.

What makes it different from a manual? There are a number of features. First of all, Grenet never begins with the usual "definition." Rather his approach is as dialectical as are the commentaries of Thomas on Aristotle. Each section begins with a set of "facts" to be explained. Other theories are mentioned along with the Thomist account, and then they are balanced against one another. Then too, Grenet is not content to repeat the tired old phrases. Instead, he lends a new vitality to St. Thomas' thinking through his obvious familiarity with the realities to which Thomas pointed. Thus, for example, "substantial change" becomes for Grenet, "profound change," and instead of "intentional existence" in the theory of knowledge, one finds "nonphysical becoming."

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the book is its clear, readable style. Few words are wasted, and yet the author manages to avoid sounding like a set of class note abbreviations. Furthermore, his development follows the natural progression of thought found in the gradual cracking open of the concept of Being for St. Thomas. In this way, one is not stymied by the metaphysics, but finds that it is a profound treatment of the real world. By all means, this book is perfect for the beginner.

David Thomasma, O.P.

FACING GOD. By William H. Quiry, S.J. Sheed and Ward, 1967. 211 pages. \$4.95.

Father Quiry undertakes an age-old task with an approach geared to the future; his task as priest-writer is to show the layman that the God so present to religious and clergy is also present to them. This same God is their God and for no reason should they be denied close contact, full realization and true dialogue with this august friend and master. Father Quiry relies heavily at times on the words of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Hans Urs von Balthasar, but he often writes with exuberant creativity, e.g., the chapters entitled "Outflanking Inertia" and "Making a Rosary." Each topic is presented complete with an introductory method and ample reference not only to de Chardin and von Balthasar but also to the Vatican II decrees on the liturgy and the apostolate of the laity, the writings of Karl Rahner and the scripture work of Father McKenzie and Father Vawter.

The main theme of the work might be presented as the conveying of Christ's message: "Pray unceasingly . . ." and the opening up to the layman of the most effective manner of prayer—meditation. At first glance this seems out of place for the layman, considering the day-to-day chores of the business world coupled with the chores of family life, a dedication to both family and community, vocation and application of talents. It is only when the layman is brought to the realization that his every action can bring him closer to his Creator—that every day-to-day business accomplishment, contact with his fellow man and expression of his humanity is an act of love and act of prayer—that he will open himself to the waiting Christ. It is not only when we are in Church, actually worshipping that we adore God; it is when we are being ourselves in the only way we know, doing what only we can do, feeling, crying and laughing as only we can, that we are giving glory to God and accepting the salvific activity of His Son. "We need not be afraid to face God . . . (actually) there is no more wholesome Christian experience!" (p. 26)

William Cunningham, O.P.

THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S PRESENCE. By Anselm Moynihan, O.P.
Alba House, 1967. 96 pages. \$1.95.

God's presence to us is the core of Christian spirituality: Father Moynihan's treatment brings new life to this ancient doctrine. The emphasis is very positive throughout. God is seen as the loving Father who watches over us all and as the life-giving Trinity who dwells in a unique way in those in grace.

The author develops the various facets of God's presence in turn. He suggests the human response that is evoked by each element of the mystery. He does discuss the pitfalls that our frailty is prone to fall into, but he does not dwell on these difficulties. And finally, he offers a number of helps towards a greater awareness of God's presence.

There are no new truths here. The theology is very traditional and the writing even gets stodgy at times. What is startling are the sudden realizations the author can lead us into. And the style is for the most part joyful, even tender.

A striking dust jacket and page layout make the comparatively high price easier to accept. Still, the number of obvious misprints is disconcerting. In short, this is a wonderful little book to give as a present—or to receive as one.

Matthew Rzeczkowski, O.P.

MAN AT PLAY. By Hugo Rahner, S.J. Preface by Walter J. Ong, S.J.
Herder and Herder, 1967. 105 pages. \$3.50.

One of my favorite works of sculpture is a German madonna and child from the baroque period: Mary is depicted grinning from ear to ear. And it is this sort of Christian playfulness that is the theme of Hugo Rahner's essay. It is a very erudite work, but the subject matter manages to keep the atmosphere from becoming too stuffy.

The prime analogate of play is the activity of God Himself. Creating is a kind of playing: it is supremely meaningful and yet supremely free, in no sense bound by necessity. Rahner traces this theme from the Greeks (Plato, especially) through the Old Testament (Prov. 8:27-31), into the patristic age. In these terms, man's activity is most godlike when it is most truly playful. True play for man, however, involves both comedy and tragedy:

Life then . . . has this dual character. It is gay because secure in God, it is tragic because our freedom continually imperils it, and so the man who truly plays must be both gay and serious at the same time; we must find him both smiling and in tears. His portion, if I may here bring in the profound synthesis of the Fathers, will be both joy and perseverance. (p. 42)

Christian revelation adds some new notes to our notion of man at play. God's gift of grace is another absolutely free and yet totally serious act. Hence it is that the mystic views himself as a plaything of God and awaits a heaven that is a game. In line with the Incarnation, whereby the invisible is made visible, the Church enacts heavenly realities in earthly forms; the liturgy is a game.

Rahner then goes on to discuss the dance, traditionally the highest form of play. By integrated movements man imitates the harmony of the heavens and longs for the harmony that is as yet imperfect within himself. The dance was held in the highest regard by the Greeks; the early Christians, however, were warned against so pagan a practice. And yet it reflects something too basic in human nature; it eventually showed up as part of the liturgy in many locales.

After the strong Platonic emphasis, Rahner devotes a final chapter to a discussion of Aristotle's *eutrapelia*, the virtue of the serious-serene man. The man who practices this virtue plies the middle course between the Scylla of the *agroikos*, the man for whom life is all too earnest, and the Charybdis of the *bomolochos*, the buffoon. These ideas suffered a fate parallel to that of the dance. The early Fathers constantly emphasize the seriousness of the Christian life and it is only when the threat of paganism has waned that the balanced view is once more achieved. St. Thomas' *Summa* article on this virtue brings the work to a close.

A reviewer is hard pressed to comment on so original a study. Suffice it to say that *Man at Play* should provide much food for thought and challenging late-night discussions. A final quote from the Ritual of Besançon (1582):

After the ending of None the dances take place in the cloisters, or if the weather is wet, in the centre of the nave. During these are to be sung the chants found in the processional. And when the dance is ended drinks of red and white wine will be served in the chapter house (pp. 84-5)

Interesting.

Matthew Rzczkowski, O.P.