

speaking, done nothing to help them towards "recognition". This is characteristic of the whole system of industrial relations where reliance is placed on strength backed by understanding rather than on law, with a consequent increase of flexibility and adaptability. The true anarchic nature of unofficial strikes—which more often than not are against the union officers and not against the employer—is emphasized when seen against the background of this system of collective bargaining and joint consultation that has been built up over the years. They threaten its whole structure.

JOHN FITZSIMONS

PREMIERS ITINÉRAIRES EN SOCIOLOGIE RELIGIEUSE. By Fernand Boulard. (Les Éditions Ouvrières: Économie et Humanisme; 510 fr.)

It is now almost twenty-five years since an article by Professor Gabriel Le Bras in the *Revue d'histoire de l'Église de France* gave the impetus to research into the religious sociology of the Church in France. The impetus had a delayed effect because his initiative was not followed until ten or more years later, but since then (and one might perhaps date a heightened consciousness of this need from the publication of *France, Pays de Mission?*) the reports of researchers, many of them trained by Professor Le Bras himself, have come thick and fast. Canon Boulard came to this study from his interest in rural problems, and in this book presents a summary of the researches that have been made so far and adds some practical proposals for further work in the same field. It falls naturally into two parts. In the first we find a detailed study of religious practice in all the regions of France except the great towns, with tentative pastoral conclusions. The second part is perhaps of more universal interest, for here Canon Boulard treats in detail of the method of studying a population both from the point of view of religious practice and of other signs of religious vitality, and suggests lines of interpretation. He is a most cautious guide, and very sensibly errs on the side of reading too little into statistics rather than too much. It seems a pity that there is no such guide in existence in English—apart from a rather more superficial questionnaire published some years ago in America in *Sociology of the Parish*—because it could be a most useful tool in the work of the apostolate and in pastoral pedagogy in general.

JOHN FITZSIMONS

DIALOGUES OF ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD. Recorded by Lucien Price. (Reinhardt; 25s.)

Sir David Ross in his introduction to this work compares it to Boswell's *Johnson*. It is interesting to try and determine why this is such

an obviously false judgment. Undoubtedly Whitehead had Johnson's stature as a public figure: though *Principia Mathematica* has suffered the fate of pioneer work in being more often referred to than read, *Process and Reality* with the lesser works is growing in influence and will one day rank among the world's philosophical classics. His talk, though as full of pleasing prejudices as Johnson's, obviously lacked that ultimate universality of appeal—it remains dons' talk: yet it must have been remarkable enough, to judge from its effects on the American university world, and on Mr Price himself. Perhaps then it is the new Boswell who is at fault. It is not that he lacks enthusiasm—one is constantly struck by the disparity between the enthusiasm felt and the impression conveyed. Perhaps it is the deadly seriousness of this enthusiasm that kills the subject, as Boswell never allowed it to. This is the cause of those many passages of solemn triviality, such as every man necessarily says, but hopes there is no one at hand to take down. It is the exactness of the record (on which Mr Price lays stress) that is fatal to his book, and makes the further comparison with Plato, suggested by the title and elsewhere, so incongruous. Mr Price will leave no puzzle for future scholars about the degree his art has contributed to his subject, for he protests he uses no art at all.

This is not of course to deny that there is much of real interest in these forty-three conversations taken down during the last fifteen years of Whitehead's life. To take a single example, it is illuminating to realize how great an effect the revolution in science had on his thought—a theme to which he returns more often than the index notes. 'There is not a single concept of the Newtonian physics which was taught as a whole truth, that has not now been displaced. . . . To have supposed you had certitude once, and certitude about the solidest-looking thing in the universe, and then to have it blow up on your hands into inconceivable infinities has affected everything else in the universe for me.'

That particular passage occurs during one of the book's pleasantest incidents—Whitehead's drive through the streets of Cambridge, Mass., in an old-fashioned cab during petrol rationing. The Americans seem to be more surprised than we should be at the sight of a horse-drawn vehicle. But the philosopher talked on. 'All this was not much more than a subconscious accompaniment to the subject under discussion.'

Whitehead was perhaps the greatest Englishman to have made a permanent home in America, and Mr Price rightly calls him an ambassador. His wise and charitable comments on the American people are well worth having. And how delightful his relationship with Mrs Whitehead in over fifty years of married life. If only Mr Price's memory had not been quite so dreadfully good.

LAURENCE BRIGHT, O.P.