

the spiritual life, cannot be undertaken without serious detriment to its nature as subordinate to and dependent upon revelation. By respecting the nature of theology, as the study of a living God who personally appeals to us in revelation, theology undertaken with the intention of being a spiritual way to God directly empowers the theologian to know God on God's own terms — through experience. Contrarily, to know God solely on our own terms, that is, outside an interpersonal relationship with Him, inherently distorts the object of theological study, to say nothing of the harm it may cause to the human spirit.

Carpenter, through the sequence of the various chapters, examines Bonaventure's understanding of the relationship between the theologian's spiritual life and the theological enterprise. For Bonaventure this relationship is mutually complementary, supportive, and progressive. Through the theologian's spiritual life — a life of repentance, prayer, discipline, etc. — he is better able to approach the academic study of theology from within its proper context — humility, faith, docility, receptivity, and the light of the Holy Spirit. Likewise as the theologian progresses in his scholarly study and knowledge of God and the Christian mysteries, this in turn fosters a deepening of the spiritual life — a humble wonderment in being encountered by the awesome mystery of the Christian Gospel. Carpenter, with clarity, examines all the various elements of this relationship within Bonaventure's thought, allowing the saint to speak often on his own behalf.

While Carpenter's primary concern is to elucidate the many writings of Bonaventure, he at times uses Bernard Lonergan as a supporting ally. This can be helpful and interesting, but it sometimes becomes an unwanted distraction. Moreover, Carpenter's prose, in the cause of clarity and completeness, can become a little rambling. Nonetheless, at a time when much contemporary theology is often completely divorced from faith and the spiritual life, Carpenter's study rightly attempts to redress this situation. He does so by examining the nature of the theological enterprise as it was espoused by and embodied in an authentic theologian who actually knew and practised the art of theology. Bonaventure studied, taught and wrote from within a living relationship with God made possible in Christ and made known in the Spirit. What better way could there possibly be for an academic to do theology and for an apprentice to learn?

THOMAS WEINANDY OFM Cap.

**LITERARY CONVERTS** by Joseph Pearce *Harper Collins*, London, 1999. Pp. 463, £25.00 hbk.

The publishers describe *Literary Converts* as 'a biographical exploration into the spiritual lives of some of the most salient figures of our times.' Dr. Barbara Reynolds describes them as a 'network of minds energising each other.' It ranges from Oscar Wilde to George Mackay Brown, from 100

T.S. Eliot to Naomi Jacob.

The story begins with two books. In 1905, G. K. Chesterton published *Heresies* and then in 1908 *Orthodoxy*, answering a critic's challenge to state his own orthodoxy, thereby himself "coming out" as a Christian. Chesterton became the focus of a new interest in Christianity especially among writers. This is the story of writers, and a few actors, who before and after GKC's death have converted and stimulated one another. It explains why the date of Chesterton's death remains in the memory from that day in 1936 when it was announced at dinner in the refectory of Blackfriars, Oxford — in those days the refectory was a sacred place where silence could be broken only for very serious business.

It is a good story to read. There is the paradox of C. S. Lewis, of all people, being "converted" by Chesterton. There is conflict: 'Sassoon deplored a "silly attack on Alfred Noyes" by Osbert Sitwell in *The Spectator*. "How drearily O. S. wastes his time and his talent with sterile spitefulness..."'. There is creative conflict: GKC and Shaw were always quarrelling but never fell out. Maurice Baring's spiritual insight: 'when you understand what *accepted* sorrow means, you will understand everything.' There is prophecy: Dorothy Sayers protesting against the great Economic Obsession: 'economic man...our latest, most stultified, least human conception of ourselves — that humourless, passionless, sexless unit in a vast financial system.' That was long before Thatcher! There is a healthy airing of the Catholic Church's best kept secret, *Rerum Novarum*. Suspicions are confirmed: Hugh Ross Williamson was removed from chairing the Brains Trust because he became a Catholic— 'You present the wrong image now.' And a pleasant surprise: C.E.M. Joad died a devout Anglican.

Chesterton's spirit runs throughout and is around today especially in the United States. Extravagant attention, however, to authors' private lives smothers the merits of their works and distorts the picture. Graham Greene's behaviour, for example, is given a special chapter. Two voices restore the balance. Fr Martindale says of *The Heart of the Matter*: 'this is a magnificent book, both theologically accurate and by a layman who knows as much as anyone can about human nature. I know one, a hard-headed man, to whom this book has given the last necessary stimulus to becoming a Catholic, and many, who like me, will continue to draw from re-reading it a deeper love of suffering, distraught humanity and of God.' George Mackay Brown says, '*The Power and the Glory* impressed me deeply... for here was a hunted and driven priest, and in many ways a worthless one, who nevertheless kept faith to the end, as better martyrs had done in other places.' It is not mentioned that Pope Paul VI had his own copy of *The Power and the Glory* nor that on meeting Greene, the pope encouraged him to continue writing.

Shoddy literary criticism has been a feature of this century. Edith Sitwell commented on it in our correspondence after the publication of

*The Canticle of the Rose* in 1949. A few years later she wrote: 'when I was a very small child, I began to see the patterns of the world, the images of wonder; and I asked myself why those patterns should be repeated — the feather and the fern and rose and acorn in the patterns of frost on the window — pattern after pattern repeated again and again. And even then I knew that this was telling us something. I founded my poetry on it...' There is a guide for a critic.

The strongly phrased negative reactions to the Second Vatican Council at the end of the book leave little preparation for the third millennium of the birth of Christ.

A few repairs to the text are needed. Prinknash is a Benedictine *abbey*, not a priory, near Cranham not Winchcombe (220). The French version of the Jerusalem Bible was done by Dominican Fathers (257). The theological texts of St Thomas Aquinas were translated by Father Thomas Gilby, without an 'e'; Father Alfred Gilbey was another character (301). Stonyhurst is spelled without an 'e' (308). Siegfried Sassoon did not select the thirty poems that compose *The Path to Peace*. He wrote to me on 23 January 1961, two months after its publication: 'Mother Margaret will have told you about this lovely book. The selection was thought of and made by Dame Felicitas, the organist at Stanbrook... Even now I can hardly believe that such a wonderful thing has been awarded me. But its significance needs no comment from me — the unity of editor, printer and poet — and the message which it conveys.' The 'late Mother Margaret Mary' is still alive. Siegfried's epigraph 'To Mary Immaculate, Mother of God, in whose keeping was given Mother Margaret Mary, Religious of the Assumption' means that she was given into the keeping of the Mother of God when she became a Religious of the Assumption.

GERARD MEATH OP

**THE SHAPING OF RATIONALITY: TOWARD INTER-DISCIPLINARITY IN THEOLOGY AND SCIENCE** by J. Wentzel van Huyssteen *William B. Eerdmans, Cambridge, 1999. Pp. xii + 303, £22.99 hbk.*

Wentzel van Huyssteen's latest book on science and theology is strikingly different from those written in England by scholars like John Polkinghorne and Arthur Peacocke. Instead of dealing with individual areas of supposed disagreement between the subjects, like the origins of the universe and the evolution of species, van Huyssteen aims at a much larger goal. Rather than refuting the prevailing view of theology's antagonism towards science, a subject which has been held up as the model of rationality in modern times, he aims at defending the rationality of both scientific and theological research as different but complementary 'reasoning strategies' which can bring us better understanding of the world and others.

The book accurately describes the modern attack on theology by