

(p. 135).

Nineham, then, demonstrates the not wholly surprising conclusion that, if Scripture is approached with a suspension of faith and disregard of tradition, it can be read in a way quite different from that in which faith has traditionally read it. In the process he raises real and important

questions about the nature of the interpreter's task, but surely it would pay us all to think through the relation of Church, Scripture, and tradition before we pack our bags for the Trobriand Islands.

PAUL PARVIS O.P.

LOVE IN PRACTICE, by Ernesto Cardenal, translated by Donald D. Walsh.
Search Press, pp. 265 £4.95

These commentaries from the Third World are an accusation against affluent Christianity. The message of our Gospel has been screwed up: when God sent his Word through Jesus the liberator, it was 'good news'; the earth was God's gift to all men, and though it had been stolen by a few exploiters and oppressors, it would soon be held in common again. The Apostles rejoiced in this socialism as the kingdom of God spread. Jesus taught them that sin (selfishness) isolated man from God's family: no one could be a child of God while he took his brother's share as his own. God wanted not ritual and sacrifice but a change of mentality; what mattered was the Spirit working through man's relation to man. Love one another was his law, and his prayer was for justice, for his kingdom to come on earth.

Over the centuries this teaching has been screwed up by false prophets who have maintained the status quo: solidarity with the real chosen race (the poor) has weakened; we stand by as they suffer hunger and torture, as they are afflicted by the leprosy of our greed, or enslaved by our monetary system. When we say all will be well for you in heaven, our word is shit. We may share the same eucharist, but can sheep and wolf be of the same family? In spite of Christ's new exodus, golden calves abound; others lose faith in brotherhood crying, what can I do? A Christianity not working for social change has lost its salt, the sword is blunted. We have become 'bad news'.

The early disciples' mentality survives among the peasant population of Ernesto Cardenal's parish in Solentiname who live from small crops and fishing. Like the Pal-

estine of Christ's day, their country is oppressed. But they do not ask God to do what men should accomplish, though it is the reading of the Gospel that made them radicals. Till Cardenal arrived they were apathetic about religion; he brought them true faith, a new genesis, the Word which did not deceive. Their community (scattered through many islands) was drawn together, their creativity developed in painting and woodcarving, and they recovered hope as they witnessed the power of the Spirit working through man to change reality, hope for the Revolution. The mystical body of Christ is more tangible in this community where each family takes turns after Mass to cook for all present and then stay long into the afternoon chatting, children from different islands playing together. The Mass was central to their life, but these gatherings were warm, joyful, unsolemn.

This book is more than a collection of dialogues held in place of the homily on the Sunday Gospel. We glimpse life in the community, beautiful tropical settings, effects of weather on the lake, family relationships, leading personalities, visitors, significant events elsewhere, and the constant shadow of repression in Somoza. Their insights shame trained theologians as the Spirit speaks through them. The language is colourful and spontaneous, direct and enriched by their splendid surroundings and their experiences; the uncensored language they use at home rather than pious, inhibited speech. Mostly they speak of love: for them theology is for liberation, and liberation is love in practice.

JOHN LYONS