

heresy and it is not surprising, and entirely laudable, that men who rejected the heresy should detest the architecture that expressed it. In the reformers' world it is not surprising that so long as the reforming protest retained its connexion with its origins, Gothic was anathema. When the Methodists tried to make everybody behave like nice lower middle-class people back came Gothic into Protestant churches: it is after all a style ideally suited to religious buildings for religions about status.

It seems to me that understanding a work of art is part of the process of understanding the world that produced it, and vice versa. Not to see what Gothic architecture is about is not to understand medieval religion: to understand medieval religion is to read Gothic architecture like a book. The aesthetic fallacy, as it seems to me, would divorce the one from the other—after all its theology may be naughty but it is pretty. It is the view of a man who, offered a choice of the works of Shakespeare in a paperback (rather hastily printed) or the complete Enid Blyton sumptuously bound in red morocco with gold tooling down the spine, preferred the latter. What I think I am trying to say is that without doubt Macbeth is better than Noddy, but which matters more in our world is in doubt, and the investigation of the problem is not of concern only to literary critics.

Signs in the Wind

by Rosemary Haughton

If the Spirit speaks to the listening people of God in the events of history, as well as in Scripture, then the events of this time seem to indicate that a renewed search for the springs of Christian spirituality is probably the most urgent task placed by the Spirit before the churches.

The visible church is the listening people. It is not all the people who listen, but it is an identifiable collection of those people who are supposed to be listening to God and acting on what they hear, and who indeed have pledged themselves to do so—though in some cases rather casually, or with extensive reservations. The people must listen to the breathing of the Spirit, even if the message be only whispered, but at this time it rises even to thunder.

At any time in the history of Christianity it would be taken for granted that the personal pursuit of holiness, or the imitation of Christ, or the experience of the Spirit, are indispensable to the Christian life. The emphasis is different under these three headings, but all definitions of how Christians deepen and increase their

personal dedication in faith assume that this is something which is to be done in the assembly of God's people, by virtue of incorporation in Christ, with all the others who share that membership, but it also takes for granted that this is a personal matter, in which each one must strive and search, often apparently alone. The task and its rewards may belong to the whole, but they also belong to each member. The need for holiness is not new, but it is being newly demanded, with renewed urgency.

In the past two centuries an emphasis on individual holiness at the expense of a sense of social and political responsibility was an easy refuge for good people who wanted to be Christians without rocking the boat too much. (Who shall blame them? It is normal to accept the assumptions of one's time without question and to assume that what does not fit them must be suspect, or impossible, or wicked.) Inevitably, the reaction in favour of Christian social and political commitment has been very violent. Some over-compensation was natural, but perhaps we have been too busy despising the meticulous observances, moral nit-picking and private charities of our immediate ancestors to observe with sufficient clarity the growth among the new, socially-concerned Christians of a self-righteous lack of any observances at all, a moral vagueness combined with a constant readiness to quarrel about morality, and substitution of indignation about the State's failures for any personal effort of love. This is not true of all, any more than Mauriac's religious 'grenouilles' are typical of past French piety, even in the restricted milieu he portrays, but if we have been justified in castigating the mistakes of our predecessors in the job of being the Church we must make the effort to be equally ruthless about our own. This isn't easy, because the current prejudices are naturally the fashionable ones and nobody likes to be spiritually dowdy. Yet it is true that if those 'old-fashioned' Christians (living in some vague period mistily associated with crinolines and fat prayer-books) frequently concentrated on private soul-cultivation as an excuse for public irresponsibility, we are too often guilty of irresponsible subjectivity in our private lives, not really compensated for by rather selective indignation in the public sector.

This is only one side of either coin. Those reared in an 'individualist' type of piety were frequently agonisingly aware of an element of built-in hypocrisy which could only be overcome by contradicting all the expectations that class, contemporary ethos and religious accommodation had built into the educational influences of the time (and this was a long time—the assumption that the basic Christian concern was personal salvation and personal holiness developed from the counter Reformation, but only became an axiom in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Also we must remember that compensating enthusiasm for the missions, throughout.) The efforts made by sincere people to live as Christians within a complex of un-Christian social and political edifices which they could not

pull down without crushing themselves and all that they valued should not provoke our contempt, but rather an admiration of the spirit that did not surrender entirely in an apparently hopeless struggle. It is easy to see that a version of the Christian life was conditioned and limited and often defeated by false social and religious assumptions. It is less easy to recognize the extent to which many Christians refused to succumb to this conditioning, but the effort is required of us. The effort is needed because the strength of that refusal is exactly commensurate with the strength and genuineness of their piety, and the same measure applies to our own powers of resistance. To put it extremely simply, the holier individual Christians were, the more they resisted the destructive doctrines of their time, even though this resistance was often 'instinctive' and combined with the normal acceptance of social structures and attitudes which we now recognize as anti-human. The same rule must apply to ourselves.

From many possible examples one typical one comes from the story of the American foundation of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, whose Foundress was determined that the children of poor families should be taught, but the only available way to do this was for the Sisters to earn their own living first by educating the children of the wealthy—who badly needed evangelizing anyway (and still do). This small group of women, mainly from conventional middle and upper-class English homes had been offered by a patron 'a luxurious frame-house' with a productive farm for their first home. The patron's agent dumped them in what turned out to be a leaky, half-rotted house in an overgrown jungle of garden. They had no money and scarcely any furniture, and they were short of blankets in the bitter cold of the draughty, unheated house in winter. They lived at first mostly on pea soup which was 'only greenish water with a pea or two at the bottom of the bowl'. They repaired the house as well as they could, endured the cold and hunger cheerfully, opened (and immediately filled) a village school in an ex-carpenter's shop and managed to recruit enough paying pupils for the school in the house itself (Catholic *and* Protestant, please note) to keep the village school open and avoid absolute starvation. Their pupils went on begging expeditions to local farms, the Sisters remained 'gay and hard-working'. Eventually, after a move to another district, matters improved. But this kind of spiritual toughness and sense of priorities was not a matter of luck, or 'breeding'. It was the direct result of the type of the Christian formation which these young women had received from the Foundress, and that training was the fruit of Cornelia Connelly's own growth in the knowledge of God. At a time when the ecclesiastical passion for centralization and minute control by long-established codes was serving to prevent responsiveness to actual and present needs, she had to fight desperately for a Rule which stressed personal dedication and love, against a well-meaning

Bishop who tried to impose one that was almost wholly obsessed with administrative detail. Mother Connelly's work survived—as her own serenity and courage survived—scandals, false accusations, illness, petty-minded officials and jealous colleagues. Her formation of her Sisters was based on the single-minded gift of oneself which her whole life exemplified, and which for her was summed up in a prayer of St Francis which she copied down: 'There is nothing on earth that I am not ready to abandon willingly with my whole heart, nothing—however painful—that I am not willing to endure with joy, nothing that I am not willing to undertake with all the strength of body and soul for the glory of my Lord Jesus Christ.' Among the things she abandoned were a very happy family life (and with it the approval of her friends and relations) and, when she was asked to educate girls, the medieval-type education then normally offered to upper-class Catholic girls, tinged with deep suspicion of any intellectual achievement and devoid even of any practically useful training.

Cornelia had a passion for Christ, and therefore a passion for truth, which she managed to pass on to her spiritual daughters. She shared this passion with others who, in their time and place, found the strength and lucidity of mind to see through the prejudices and distortions of their time, and yet to get to work in a setting conditioned by these, without despair and without bitterness. Matteo Ricci, Benedict Joseph Labre, Thérèse Martin, Philippine Duchesne, John Bosco, Bernadette Soubirous—the list goes on, and these few are only the Catholics on a list that extends across denominational boundaries, and includes the astounding lives of people like Elizabeth Fry and General Booth. These wildly disparate characters had one thing in common: an originality and truthfulness of mind which sprang, perhaps, from natural genius but which found its drive and staying power solely in the love of God. They made mistakes and sinned, and their mistakes and sins were often serious and also were often the direct result of the moral distortions of their time. They had the blindness of their period, but they had a vision which saw further than their contemporaries—the vision of Christ.

There were others who tried to do good, and to serve God in all kinds of work that obviously needed doing, but who show very clearly the way in which bright ideas, strength of mind, zeal and courage are not enough when holiness is lacking. Over and over again, the great threat to the enduring work of the people with a real passion for Christ has been the presence of other people with a passion for the image of themselves as servants of Christ.

This is where we came in. The real failures of our Christian predecessors grew not from the limitation of their social and political vision, their narrow categories of virtue and of sin, or their baroque pieties, but from their lack of that single-minded sensitivity to the things of God which could transcend these things. Our failure is

likely to be as great or greater, if we allow ourselves to suppose that because we have been forced to become aware of categories of political and social sin which they did not recognize we can rely on an accuracy of moral judgment which will infallibly guide our efforts in the right direction and ensure their success (or if they don't succeed assure us that this is the fault of the 'opposition', which is, as infallibly, evil). Our moral failures are likely, in fact, to be considerably more disfiguring and sick than those of our forefathers, just because we can see further. Knowing so much, we are sure we know all, and refuse to consider that we too might have our blind spots. Knowledge without love or humility looks like being the death of the race, and it will certainly be the death of the spirit in the race if we do not repent in time. The remedy lies where it always did—in the full growth of that spirit through the following of Christ by each Christian.

The Church, the listening people, is being reminded of this truth by influences and signs in the world around. They are very various and one of these signs is the growth of a real folk-song movement. This is a very different affair from the middle-class cultivation of folk-arts of the thirties, though it owes much to those 'cranks' who got nowhere in their own time. All over the West the monotoned incantations of the secular planners (of right and left), who treat people as a lump to be forced into the correct shape of health and prosperity are being drowned by the voices of the folk singers. In pubs and clubs and homes and streets they sing songs of sorrow and marriage, birth and death, pain and joy, bawdry and bitter grief. They are songs about individual people living as human beings do, painfully, enjoyably and hopefully, always searching. Funny, tragic, or wild, new ones and old ones, the songs all have this tone of nostalgia and hope, which is the tone of the human spirit that will not be reduced to a part of the mass, but it is fiercely individual *because* it belongs to the whole people. The 'folkness' of folk songs lies in just this—that they belong to all people by being about separate and unrepeatable and often peculiar individuals. The struggle to be human is for each, but can only be sustained because each knows and celebrates the common humanity as he experiences it. It is this earthy spirituality that Christians need to recover if the Church is to be prophetic, wild, and holy, and not merely socially enlightened—necessary, and overdue, though that enlightenment may be.

There are other signs that it is time to take the lid once more off the well of truth from which the mystics and saints drew. The hope of earlier decades that the right political philosophy would infallibly lead to justice and happiness has faded, because it was forgotten that man as the political animal is not less a spiritual one, and can be as good or as evil as he chooses, not as his ideology proposes. The reaction among some of the young towards a philosophy of anarchy is, when a Christian analysis is applied to it, a reassertion that the

goodness of a society depends on the holiness of its members, which is released by love, not by regimentation, however kindly. Attempts to put such a philosophy into practice may not succeed for long, but the attempt itself is the kind of reminder we need that the springs of the spirit are in people, not in the necessary political structures, even though those structures be absolutely required, and required to be conformed to the needs of the spirit, if the spirit is to get things done. We do not need to be told that the wrong structures can suppress it—for a while—or deflect its course underground, but even if the Church has broken through some old barriers, the more democratic and flexible types of organization, carefully suited to the needs of the time, can soon become as empty and profitless as the *Queen Elizabeth*, if they are not lived by people who know how to live.

Signs are all around us. We can see them in the hunger for spiritual space and adventure that expresses itself in eccentricity of dress, in the rejection of luxury, technology and even cleanliness by people who are groping desperately for fresh air in a stifflingly materialistic world. Signs are present in the new primary schools where children pursue, with only the necessary minimum of guidance, the study they have discovered for themselves, alone or in groups, and where the discipline and order spring from the demands of the work rather than of the teacher.

Negative signs are there also, in a cult of sex which is not earthy and bawdy but despairing, and clinically purified of passion and human grief and the wrestling with death; this is what happens when people cease to hope for the spirit, or are afraid of it. They are there in the distortion of values which regards physical or mental weakness as sufficient to exclude the old, or the unborn, from the category of 'useful' humanity, because usefulness is measured in terms of the ability to hold down a job or enjoy the more obvious pleasures of life. It is a calculation of value from which the power to give love, or to inspire it, has been excluded. It is an ethos that would, for instance, regard as a pathetic and disgusting waste of valuable time and energy the Sunday afternoons of one father who regularly wheels out his small son in the park, a child whose grotesquely enlarged skull contains a brain incapable of observable response to any stimulus whatever.

But the perception of reality that can justify actions such as this father's is one that grows on the edges of mystery, where people live in daily and conscious fidelity to the contradictions that underlie all human life. Such people know without being told that to abandon that commitment to unknowing is to destroy the basis of living. They often do it without knowing why, often without support and even in the face of opposition and contempt. For the Christian, this perception is central, it is explicit in the argument of the cross, but it can only be interiorized by the personal living of the whole situation. It cannot be done by attempts to apply analytically the wholeness

of the cross/resurrection insight into the meaning of life, to situations of which our awareness is necessarily partial because acquired by observation and reason—not directly. The intellectual application of a Gospel ethic to our particular setting is valid, but not sufficient, unless both are seen, and lived, by people who walk the edge of that heart-breaking mystery as their daily path.

It is not enough, even, to use awareness of the ‘edge’ as a kind of touchstone of realness. One of the signs raised by the Spirit is the search in the arts for a way to undo the bonds that normally tie human minds to a sequence of events they can observe but not alter, and thus to plunge people into a ‘pure’ humanness. Some contemporary poets, dramatists and musicians seem to be trying to push us into this mystery, by denying the reason any foothold, yet demanding its desperate exercise in a finally useless attempt to take hold of an essential experience which is constantly offered yet never accessible. It seems like an attempt to humiliate the human confidence in the senses and in rational, arguable conclusions to the point at which it will surrender its autonomy and consent to lie still and listen. Yet there is no peace here, since the reason for trying to force people to surrender their control is in fact a reasoned type of despair, leading logically to a more final despair, not to the self-abandonment of love which trusts where it cannot see. Contemporary art says, ‘Let go, your attempts to make sense are the creations of a deluded self-confidence’, but the Christian demand says, ‘Let go, and allow the things you obscurely want, and know, and the actions they impel you to which you cannot justify, to modify the sense you make’.

To quote someone infinitely better qualified to speak than I am, Dan Berrigan (in *New Blackfriars*, last October), asks what we Christians are to do with our lives, in a world in which ‘day after day, people are seeing more clearly the dead-end character of the lives they are being required to lead, according to the canons of public policy and private decency’. Seeing the signs already described, and others, and seeing that ‘politicians, churchmen, judges, punishers and rewarders and guardians of values and properties, (are) nearly all of them moving in the wrong direction, acting on the wrong diagnosis . . .’ what can we do? And since he is a Christian, and therefore committed to walking on the edge of mystery, not in stoical recklessness but in love, he breaks out with an almost Pauline cry of trust in life through death. ‘What might we not create for the future, if we somehow see this period through, live in the breach, consent to be cut down to size, as only the imprisoned or the hunted are cut down, are forced to confront our poverty and wretchedness? . . . One must not waste so precious an opportunity.’ But the opportunity is not to be seized by accident or good luck. ‘In order to bring such things to pass, it is of first import, I would think, to be able to pray.’ That, with Jesus, who was ‘never quite respectable. He could not be academicized out of existence—there were always those

ragged fools somewhere at the back of the mind, those literalists, fundamentalists really, urging on the ancient clumsy game. Hidden Springs, Saints. Subjects of awe, declamations, feast days, the Big Ones, almost (never quite) dead; better off dead. But never quite.' Never quite. (The list goes on, and includes typical literalists, Abbé Pierre, Dorothy Day, Mother Teresa—Dan Berrigan.)

What about us, the bystanders, the ones who haven't (at least not yet) been dragged through a hedge backwards, perforce leaving behind the clutter of intellectual and moral badges and buttons with which we try to convince ourselves that we are really involved? Do we have to wait for God to ruffle our hair and cover us with leaves and ridicule before we consent to be 'cut down to size' and rediscover the literal Jesus of the saints? In that case there is no church but only a club for geniuses. What the folk-songs are saying, and the junk-shop finery in the demonstrations, and the absorbed six-year-olds covered in clay, and the angry poets who miss the still centre, and the father wheeling his idiot son through the park, is that there is a church, full of people *each* of whose job is holiness, being with Jesus: without reserve, often without full understanding, but also without the kind of spiritual evasiveness pretending to be humility that leaves the battle to the giants.

There are no bystanders in this war. Thomas Merton was wrong when he felt, in the introduction to one of his last books, that his monastic commitment made him 'inevitably something of a bystander'. His own life was a proof that it did no such thing, and his life and work deprive the rest of us of excuse for standing by.

But it is easy to say, and even to see, that the war against principalities and powers allows no civilians. It is not so easy to see where we get started in training. Or, to abandon the Pauline metaphor (it is perhaps a little too near the bone) how do we set about finding the spring of true contemplation and holiness, which should well up in the baptized but is so easily drained off into marshes of self-deception and worldliness (the 'best butter', of course)? We cannot copy our forefathers, because we think and feel differently, we are different kind of people. The old books, and the old advisers, tried to show us how to find holiness wherever we might be, on the assumption that we had to stay there, or at least that there was not normally any necessity for us to go anywhere else. We know, now, that we nearly always do have to go 'somewhere else' to seek holiness, at least in the sense of a drastic shift in accepted values and way of life. The world that drove Dan Berrigan underground, and finally into gaol, is not a world that allows Christians to grow in Christ, placidly, in the bed where heredity, or natural ability, or chance, planted them. Yet we have to start from where we are, and discover where to go because the Spirit pushes us. And we become aware of the pushes by the habit of openness to God and man, in prayer, as Dan Berrigan said.

There is plenty to be said about that, but not by me. Growing from that, as the tree grows from its roots (but the roots also need the light

and air which the leaves collect) the decisions follow, in reaction to specific situations, but not pragmatically because they are decisions in the spirit. What kind of decisions? Nothing very new. To give help where it is needed, not where it is easy; to resist the propaganda of evil, even when it is fashionable evil; to accept a lower standard of living even if it means being the odd one out; to refuse to wave the popular flag, even the popular Christian flag, when it is not clear that it has a cross on it; or simply to go on searching, and apparently staying still, and feeling unhappy about that, when we find God is still busy over private preparations of his own, and isn't in a hurry to show us the way to go.

In all these ways we shall follow the steps of our fathers, but in order to do so we may perhaps have to cling more closely than they did to the edge of mystery. Our way is certainly not harder but it is more problematic. The old path of personal self-discipline and deepening prayer is still there, but it can too easily take a detour around the less personal and immediate responsibilities of being here and now. People who feel the wind of the Spirit but don't recognize whose breath it is, escape this difficulty sometimes by the search for a purely passive type of spirituality which lets them off confronting the political agonies of the time. The escape in the opposite direction is to identify with these and so avoid confronting the evil at the roots of the world. But the spirit is the spirit of Jesus, and neither way out will do for him, but only the intersection of time and eternity which is the cross. Which, means, at least in part, doing without the satisfaction of knowing what one is at, because it is not entirely oneself that is at it. *C'est plus fort que moi*, and very much odder than any of us can hope to understand.

But if there is no leaflet of printed instructions issued for this job there are the signs to be considered, just as there are signs that show the acuteness of the need for a recovery of personal holiness itself. These same signs show which way the wind is blowing. It is blowing in the direction of an idiosyncratic type of Christian holiness, out of step with the times yet meeting its obscurely expressed needs, and often out of step with the more orderly (and equally necessary) aspects of Christian life and church. It is blowing away from the worship of technology, and will therefore make itself unpopular with the still prevailing (though attacked) ethos of the Age of Business. It brings especially a fresh breath of the voluntary poverty of the gospels, and of the discovery of brotherhood in comparatively informal ways. The results of a responsiveness to the new breathing of the spirit are things like the new monastic life of Boquen, where celibates, married people, permanent members and temporary ones, form one community in Christ; or like the older established groups of houses of hospitality in New York and in great city slums across the U.S., where all share the food of the poor; or like the Simon communities in England; or the even more drastically committed women

who gathered round Mother Teresa in Calcutta to care for the most destitute, sick and abandoned of all. It has produced farming communes and draft-resisters and dedicated squatters and people like the Petits Frères who live and worship in tenement flats and work in factories. It has also produced, significantly, a small but useful crop of hermits.

This isn't a religious revival, which can be useful but can equally be quite spurious. This is the old routine of building the kingdom. The difference is that the kingdom of this world, after a period of looking like an impressive option for humanity, has once more turned out to be literally dust and ashes. But the other kingdom is not made with hands, or not just hands. The kingdom of heaven is within you, which means, for most of us, that we need cracking open.

Catholics and Pentecostals

by Simon Tugwell, O.P.

Since 1967 considerable impetus has been given to group prayer in the Catholic Church, by the Catholic Pentecostal Movement in North America. This movement began as largely a lay movement of spiritual renewal in Catholic university circles in the U.S.A. It has connexions with the Spanish-born *cursillo* movement, whose aim is to bring Catholics to a personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus (the evangelical terminology is deliberate), but it actually derives from the encounter with interdenominational Pentecostalism. It received massive and sensational publicity, and grew with amazing rapidity, spreading throughout the States, and penetrating into Canada. In 1969 it was cautiously approved by the U.S. hierarchy, and has also been enthusiastically recommended by one or two individual bishops.

Although it is a very variegated phenomenon, running right through it is the insistence that all Christians can and should claim 'the promise of the Father' in what they, with other Pentecostals, call 'baptism in the Spirit'. That is to say, people who are already believers in Christ call down upon themselves or upon each other an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, 'just as it was in the beginning' at Pentecost. The usual procedure is for someone who has already had the experience to lay hands on one who is seeking it, with prayer; it is believed that this will result in a sudden or gradual unfolding of the person's life in Christ into the charismatic manifestations, usually beginning with tongues, followed in due course by prophecy, interpretation, healing, or some such supernatural endowment or ministry. It is claimed that a great many people, some on the point of