

and acknowledges that with us here in the present the social implications of the Gospel have not even begun to be realised. But the conservative sees pretty soon that Maritain hankers after no régime but the Kingdom of God ; and the radical realises, equally clearly, that he is quite untouched by the romanticism which discolours the revolutionary, the Utopian, mirage.

It is not only in politics—it is also in art—that Maritain has made vital contact with the currents of contemporary thought. No one has done so much to lay the foundations of a Christian aesthetic, in which any artist who pursues the truth of his métier may nevertheless find a place. But his influence, as I have said, has a wider range than the intellect. It proceeds from charity. I have moved too much among men active in the controversies and sharing the anxiety of our time, not to know what this influence has meant to them. If there are sincere searchers after truth who believe that Catholicism is something, after all, other than a fantasy of reaction, a *nostalgie du temps perdu*, it is because they have, in many cases, made contact with the mind and the heart of Maritain. He has many friends and admirers in this country ; some are within, and some are without, the household of the Faith. But I believe I speak for them all when I wish him many happy returns of his birthday.

ROBERT SPEAIGHT

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A NEW EDITION OF PASCAL¹

PASCAL, to use a customary word of his own, is admirable. It is true that the satire of the *Provinciales*, however clever and amusing in its time, is out-of-date and unjust ; that his scientific experiments and writings belong to the domain of the history of science. But his apology for Christianity, even in the fragmentary form of the famous *Pensées*, is an imperishable work. Into it he put all his knowledge and experience of the world, of human achievement, and of the divine things that were the absorbing pursuit of his mature life.

¹ *Pascal's Apology for Religion*, by H. F. Stewart (Cambridge University Press, 8s. 6d.).

It is a happiness to re-read them, or a selection of them, in this new edition: to marvel once again at Pascal's penetration and his ardent zeal, to feel once again the beauty and power of so many compelling pages and lapidary sentences; especially as we are reminded in an early paragraph (No. 11) of what is in fact the goal of this long array of close reasoning and urgent pleading: 'Jesus-Christ the object of everything, the centre to which everything tends.'—'The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God of Christians is a God of love and consolation, He is a God who fills the soul and heart of those whom He possesses, a God who makes them feel within themselves their wretchedness and His infinite mercy; who unites Himself with them in the depths of their soul; who fills it with humility, joy, trust, love; who makes them incapable of any other end than Himself.'

The history of the editions of Pascal's fragments and of numberless commentaries on him is in itself a commentary; by arbitrary selection he can be and has been made to reflect the most varied states of mind. Brunschvicg did the immense service of publishing all the fragments and jottings, mere memoranda of some of them, and of sorting them out under convenient headings. The task remains of threading one's way through his Sections in the light of Pascal's mind and intention. This we can only know from his other writings and from biographical material such as we get in Étienne Périer's Preface to the first edition, and in the Discourse recorded under the name of *Filleau de la Chaise*. We might add the Life of Pascal by his sister, Madame Périer. From these we can get a clear general plan of the great Apology for Christianity which was the absorbing preoccupation of Pascal's last years.

Dr. Stewart's work proves excellently what he says, 'that illustration of the main points of the Apology can be found in the scraps of paper on which Pascal scribbled the thoughts that flashed through his brain, as well as in the carefully written pages which he headed 'A.P.R.', 'A.P.R. pour demain' (i.e., 'à Port Royal'): an apparent reference to an intended discourse, perhaps to the very Discourse of which a summary has been preserved to us. But as if also to prove the inevitable uncertainty of any precise arrangement, some fragments have slipped into more than one context: Nos. 390 and 409, Nos. 231 and 641, Nos. 75 and 643 are identical.

Pascal would address himself to the men of the world about him, the so-called *esprits forts* ('up to a certain point only'), the *libertins* laying down the law of thought and action for themselves, the deists—it is interesting to find that word under Pascal's pen—in town and about the court; to the elegant Mérés and the sad Mitons;

he would force them in the very name of common-sense and reason to study the vagaries of the human mind, to look into themselves and out on the realities of life and history, to learn what the religion is that they are opposing, to accept the supernatural, and to find the key to all things in the Person of Christ and in the Church he founded. The proofs of Christ's mission from his character, his miracles, and his fulfilment of the prophecies, are drawn out with predilection: this part of the *Pensées* is most remarkable even in the light of modern exegesis. Pascal dwells on the standing miracle of the perpetuity of the Church, its sacrifice and sacraments. The Messiah 'came at length in the fulness of time; and since then so many schisms and heresies have sprung up, so many States have been overthrown, there have been so many changes in all things; and this Church, adoring him who has always been adored, has subsisted uninterruptedly. And what is admirable, incomparable, and utterly divine, is that this religion, which has lasted always, has always been opposed' (No. 426). Again, Christ's mission is described: 'He was alone to produce a great people, elect, holy and chosen; to guide it, feed it, lead it into the place of rest and holiness; to set it apart (*le rendre saint*) for God; to make it the temple of God, reconcile it to God, save it from the anger of God, deliver it from the slavery of sin, which reigns visibly in man; to give laws to this people, engrave those laws in their hearts, offer himself to God for them, sacrifice himself for them, be a spotless host, and himself the sacrificing priest: for he was to offer himself, his body and his blood, and yet to offer bread and wine to God . . .' (No. 539). Thoughts like these make one forget the echoes of contemporary controversies that are heard in some of the fragments concerning the Church.

Pascal makes it perfectly clear, however, that faith is a gift of grace; reason and religious practices must prepare the way for grace. 'There are three means to faith: reason, habit (*coutume*), inspiration. The Christian religion, which alone has reason, does not admit as its true children those who believe without inspiration; not that she excludes reason and habit, on the contrary; but we must open our mind to the proofs, confirm ourselves in them by habit, but offer ourselves by humiliations to inspirations, which alone can produce the true and salutary effect: *Ne evacuetur crux Christi.*' (No. 641).

Pascal's immediate purpose explains why he puts aside teleological and metaphysical proofs of the truths of religion: the people he had in view either could not or would not consider them. 'He aimed at showing,' writes Madame Périer, 'that the Christian re-

ligion had as many marks of certainty as the things that are held in the world to be most certain.' This, as Dr. Stewart points out in his Preface, is like what we find in the *Grammar of Assent*, where indeed Newman quotes and develops Pascal, recognising in him an affinity of mind. But metaphysical arguments he found too much beyond the ordinary reasoning of men, and productive of only a speculative knowledge of God: which again reminds us of Newman's *notional assent*. Pascal would not be content until he had brought his convert 'in complete self-surrender to the feet of Christ.

It is a joy to read Pascal in this edition almost without notes. But this sobriety of comment may be a drawback and lead to misunderstanding. Dr. Stewart's students will, of course, have the benefit of his oral explanations. Three things might with advantage be pointed out to the general reader. First, Pascal has a tendency, springing from his intimacy with Montaigne and from the tinge of Jansenism in his outlook, to exaggerate the inherent wretchedness of human nature consequent on the Fall. The *Philosophia perennis* is more balanced. Then his reading of previous moralists was rather specialised: those whom he quite rightly singles out as inadequate are the Pyrrhonists and the Stoics. And still more important for those who are not experts in French is the question of Pascal's language. He used words in the ordinary sense current in his time and circle: Jacques Chevalier's index of definitions in his *Pascal* in the series *Maîtres de la Pensée Française* is invaluable here. *Divertissement* including so many things that we regard as serious occupations; *honnêteté* covering a whole code of manners; *libertin* only at the beginning of its evolution; *volonté* often meaning desire; *raison* standing now for abstract reasoning, now for common-sense, or for the faculty of reason; *sentiment* often not far from Newman's *illative sense*; above all *cœur*, because of the constant misinterpretation of the famous words: *Le cœur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît point*, as if Pascal were an emotionalist; these and other terms are so many traps for the unwary. However, this reviewer confesses that this question of language is perhaps a hobby; and as Dr. Stewart charmingly admits of himself, no Pascal-lover is sorry to have a chance of airing a point of view.

Truly understood, Pascal is an excellent spiritual tonic and, indeed, as Dr. Stewart says, 'a very present help for all who seek to champion the Christian Faith.'

A simple uneducated Frenchwoman being ill in hospital, a priest-friend took her a little volume of the *Pensées*. At his next visit she said: *Il a de bonnes idées, ce Pascal!*

MARY RYAN.