

see the same attitudes at play in the creation of the New Testament, which derives from the Christians' participation in the Lord at the Eucharist. Someone has misled Dr Sölle on the doctrine of the Eucharist, which she takes to be a static substitutional sacrifice, rather than the dynamic 'kingdom of identity' in which we find ourselves in finding each other before God. However we explain Transubstantiation we must at least emphasize the relational character of Communion. It is a mark of Dr Sölle's worth that she prompts a search along the bookshelves (unrequited) for a theology of the sacraments after the Death of God.

Some of the footnotes are somewhat odd.

Those who do not have to look along their bookshelves to know they have neither the Weimar edition nor Strachey's translation deserve more than the volume and page number of those editions when Luther and Freud are cited, titles of commentaries and papers would have helped; a note that Hofmannsthal was an 'Austrian poet, 1874-1929' is either needless or useless, while one on the same page which informs us that Calderon wrote a play 'entitled *Das grosse Welttheater* (The Great World Theatre)' shows that the indefatigable Mr Lewis found translating Dr Sölle's prose more than usually tiring.

HAMISH SWANSTON

THE NUN: SACRAMENT OF GOD'S SAVING PRESENCE, by the Most Rev. Gabriel Garrone, translated by Paul D. Collins. *Alba House, New York*, 1967. 190 pp. \$3.95.

NUNS, COMMUNITY PRAYER AND CHANGE, by Sister Rosemarie Hudson, S.O.S. *Alba House, New York*, 1967. 183 pp. \$3.95.

THE LIFE OF A NUN, by Françoise Vandermeerch (Sister Marie-Edmund, H.S.H.), translated by Donald Attwater. *Geoffrey Chapman, London*, 1967. 142 pp. 25s.

The best thing about these three books is the dust-jacket of the first one—interesting title, interesting photograph of a medical sister and a couple of soldiers. The blurb tells us that the author, the Most Rev. Gabriel Garrone, previously Archbishop of Toulouse, was appointed Pro-Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities in February 1966—one of the 'new men' on the Curia. Yet the book itself, despite its title, is no more than a collection of unctuous *fevorinos* and entirely lacking in structure. The other two books are equally lame. Sister Rosemarie Hudson's is a messy book on liturgical *aggiornamento* and lacks orientation. Community prayer is not set within the context of public worship. There is no mention of the sisters joining in parish worship or even of praying with their pupils or patients. The book could be summed up in this quotation from page 67: 'Sisters in their semi-private chapels have a greater opportunity of carrying out these prescripts with loving forethought for variety, dignity and piety than do congregations of large churches.' Françoise Vandermeerch's book is puzzling as it is not clear for whom it is written. Aspirants? Religious themselves? Or 'the public'? The third part is the best, though even here the author touches many vital points but, finding them also painful points, skids off. The acute problem of conflicts arising from the clash between professional responsibilities and religious obedience is not even mentioned.

Yet these books are no worse—they may even be better—than the general run of books written specifically for nuns on the religious life. A glance at the publishers' lists show that we provide a good market for the Helpful Household Hints type of book (Six recipes for the Chapter of Faults). But this is not enough. It is too shallow. What I think we need are books that really probe the theological basis of our life: and these are not forthcoming. Why? It is difficult to offer more than a guess necessarily based on limited experience, but I would suggest that nuns are not in the habit of thinking deeply enough about the *theology* of the religious life. This may be the result of the whole noviciate system whereby novices are often given answers to questions which they had not yet formulated for themselves. Curiously enough this is particularly dangerous when the noviciate instructions are good, for the better the answers seem to fit, the more the system discourages deep questioning. Nuns are also hampered by inadequate theological education and some may be drugged with overwork. But worse than this is fear of asking questions that have no ready-made answers. We are much more housebound than our male counterparts both literally and metaphorically. A teaching sister's interests are much more concentrated on her school than are, for example, a Jesuit's or a Benedictine's. A contemplative nun enjoys (or suffers from) a far stricter enclosure than a contemplative monk.

This is partly due to canon law drawn up by clerics who both idealize us and distrust us and would chain us to the top of a pedestal, though also due to our own deep desire to concentrate our devotion. But it has the danger of narrowing our vision and in these days of *aggiornamento* it has this particular danger that we come to love our houses with a fierce feminine possessiveness, even the dangerous flight of steps and the sometimes hideous interior décor. It is a nerve-racking business

for the housebound to repair the house while they are living in it. So we paper over the cracks and re-arrange the furniture. But this cannot go on for ever. We will never find the vital answers until we have the courage to ask ourselves the probing questions, the serenity to hold on during the inevitable gap between question and even the most tentative answer and the tenacity to face further questions that will surely arise in the process.

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PROBLEMATIC MAN, by Gabriel Marcel. *Burns and Oates, New York, London, 1967.* 144 pp. 32s.

THE WORLD OF PERSONS, by Charles Winckelmans de Cléty. *Burns and Oates, London, 1967.* 444 pp. 63s.

As a description of his philosophy, Marcel prefers the term Christian Socratism to Christian Existentialism: the strongly platonist orientation of his later thought makes this preference understandable. Nevertheless, the origin of Marcel's whole philosophy is that self-questioning of man which finds its answer in a self-creation within a communion of persons, and he is more accurately seen as working out a Christian personalism. *Problematic Man* (ET of *L'Homme Problématique*, 1955) can be seen as a commentary on his achievement.

Marcel's introductory essay on the concept of Uneasiness, followed by his analyses of this problem in other thinkers, reveals how this question of the person has determined his entire philosophical attitude. This question forced him out of an idealism which suppressed man's historicity. It determines his rejection of the Aristotelian-Thomist account of the relationship between God and Man, which he sees (p. 54) as a mechanistic debasement of both. It brings him to the valid insight (p. 143) that the philosophies of existence founded on anguish lead to a dead end, when they ignore the possibility and fact of hope. It brings his philosophical journey into remarkable proximity with that of Heidegger, not only in their original overcoming of a subject-object dualism by showing that man's being-in-the-world precedes and grounds all objectification, but also in their later reflexions on Being and the Holy and on language as a disclosure of world (cf. pp. 44f.). Finally it is Marcel's Christian personalism which relates him to a succession of thinkers from Augustine onwards whose reflexion on uneasiness and the intersubjectivity of spiritual destinies has articulated itself in a Christian Platonism—a metaphysic of light, of truth as presence, of essence and participation.

One has to ask, then: why has Marcel's philosophy not been more decisive? Why, for example, were his fundamental insights into human existence—the dualism between Being and Having, Mystery and Problem, Incarnation and Reification—ignored by investigators into psychological alienation, Laing for instance, for whom Sartre's concept of bad faith or Heidegger's being-in-the-world were so important? Was it that disintegration attracts more than integration? Was it the too overtly Christian language, the lack of an orthodox atheistic rubric? Or was it not something in the philosophical manner that privatized his insights, an orientation towards inwardness, face-to-face encounters and a cosmic piety which could be felt as a dualistic evasion of the technology, abstract thought and secularization characterizing life today? Marcel's thought suggests a soul in exile, divided from itself and its spiritual fatherland. His work, in its greatness and limitations, expresses the problem that no personalist philosophy hitherto has resolved—that of integrating within its perspective various impersonal levels of reality and modes of awareness, especially rational abstraction and scientific analysis. What Christian personalism needed was less, perhaps, a Platonist than an Aristotelian development.

Fr Charles Winckelmans de Cléty has made here a decisive contribution. *The World of Persons* also operates between two poles, problematical man and intersubjective man. But the connexion is made, not via Platonism, but by a re-formulation of the Aristotelian question: not however by *reconstructing* unity from multiplicity, but by showing phenomenologically the personal unity that precedes and grounds multiplicity. The book unfolds a single intuition, that the universe is a system formed by a plurality of interpenetrating, mutually