

any sense without ultimate genocidal threats, and without a readiness, in certain circumstances, on the part of governments, officers and men (and therefore also their peoples), to put their threats into action. Sir Peter's answer to this question would be most valuable.

3. The question of non-violent resistance is immensely complex. It is a question to which, again, one would especially like to see examined by minds like Sir Peter's. I do not reject Sir Stephen King-Hall's proposals; I am merely anxious that they should be analysed with maximum toughness of mind and spirit. After all, even the catacombs had their point.

## Reviews

THEOLOGY AND THE UNIVERSITY, An Ecumenical Investigation, edited by John Coulson. *Darton, Longman and Todd 15s.*

The importance of this book has already been widely recognized, but time will be needed to take its full measure; which is some comfort for a belated reviewer. But why does 'important' seem in this case so clearly the right adjective? For three reasons, I think. First, this book is at long last a really searching examination of conscience on the part of Roman Catholic theologians and intellectuals into their situation with regard to higher education in Great Britain today – their relative isolation, precisely as bearers of a *theological* message, from the university world, and the opportunities available to them to remedy this. Secondly, it concretely exemplifies the 'ecumenism' that we are all talking about, and does so, on the whole, at a high intellectual level.

Thirdly, it deals seriously and yet never at all

pretentiously with a very urgent and actual problem, that of the insertion of the Christian mind, as bearing its own specific witness to truth, into modern culture, and into it just at those points of growth and activity – the universities – where above all culture means, or ought to mean, the specifically human appetite for truth (a university, as Canon Richardson finely says here, being 'an open society of teachers and students who come together in uncoerced association for the common pursuit of knowledge and with the single purpose of learning from one another'.) The first of these three features of this symposium has a special interest, obviously, for Catholics. And so in a sense has the second. But the third should draw, at least the interested attention of everyone concerned, directly or indirectly and either as

teacher or student, with higher education in this country. Of course, since the majority of the contributors are Catholics, there is a decided – though by no means exclusive – emphasis on problems that directly concern Catholics alone; such as that of the desirability or not of a ‘Catholic University’, a question much to the fore in the earlier chapters and almost unanimously answered in the negative. Still, the book’s subtitle, ‘an ecumenical investigation’, is strictly true – even if, as we shall see, the range of possible ‘ecumenicity’ is not envisaged by all the contributors to its full extent.

The book is in part a survey of experience, past and present; in part a statement of theory; in part an exemplification of the kind of mental intercourse or dialogue that might be expected to result from an increasing contact of theology with the ‘lay’ university mind; in part a sketch of practical proposals. The first of these topics crops up everywhere and is the one most thoroughly worked out. The second is treated *ex professo* by only one contributor, Father Charles Davis, but his paper has a force and brilliance which command, in a sense, the entire discussion. The third topic was the one that least lent itself to satisfactory treatment in a work of this kind, and it remains, as presented, somewhat marginal to the others; but the book certainly gains by it – especially, I felt, by Dr Kenny’s performance on the frontiers between theology and philosophy. As for the practical proposals they are mostly confined to Father Laurence Bright’s discreet and lucid concluding remarks.

Now for a few comments in detail. The Abbot of Downside leads off with an introductory paper strongly supporting the idea of ‘the presence of Catholic theology in the universities’ (with an emphasis on the good this would do to Catholics) but warning us at once of what is likely to prove the chief practical obstacle if what is envisaged

is Catholics teaching in existing, or projected, university departments of theology rather than trying to set up marginal ‘institutes’ of their own – i.e., the plain fact that, while ‘our universities . . . have a tradition which is hostile to any external control of their teaching’, the Church can hardly be expected to leave her theologians to operate entirely uncontrolled by herself. But this after all is only to point to something that everyone is aware of, non-Catholics included; and if the latter are – as here and there they certainly are – prepared to let us in, they will do so presumably with their eyes open to the possible consequences. No one can say he is being deceived. Some tension, sooner or later, is inevitable; but that is no reason for not taking what a strong body of opinion on both sides of the ecclesiastical borderline thinks a risk well worth taking for the good of religion generally.

The next five papers take stock of Catholic experience in or with universities since the mid-nineteenth century (nobody even mentions the great historical example of the medieval universities, and this is doubtless understandable, but in passing I would like to draw attention to a recent profound study of that particular historical experience of the Catholic intellect – Père Chenu’s *La foi dans l’intelligence*, Paris, Editions du Cerf, 1963). Dr Monica Lawlor, the only woman in the symposium, scrutinizes the modern British Catholic undergraduate: an acute and convincing dissection and incidentally a very feminine one; no man could be at once so compassionate and so feline. Still on the Catholic undergraduate, Father McCabe describes his well-laid plans to convert the young from ‘apologetics’. With the next three papers the panorama expands in time and space: back to Newman, with Mr John Coulson presenting evidence that in his later years that great educator changed his mind about the ideal of a Catholic university and reached the

conclusion that, at least for modern Englishmen, this was neither possible nor desirable; then across the Atlantic with Mr D. Callahan's reflections on the American Catholic universities; and across the Channel with Father Peter Fransen's on the various ways in which theology has been taught on the Continent, especially in Catholic countries, since the separation of State and Church after the French Revolution and the consequent abolition of faculties of theology in the old universities.

Next comes Father Davis's paper 'Theology and its Present Task', a magnificently alive and intelligent statement of principles which ought to be studied by everyone whom this book is likely to interest. Subtly argued and abounding in precious insights and distinctions (see for example the pages distinguishing dogmatic and biblical theology) yet its outstanding characteristic seems to me a forthright simplicity. Precisely because Christian theology studies the self-disclosure of God in Christ which is something present as well as past, 'the real theological questions are always contemporary', and are moreover affected, indirectly at least, by every contemporary advance in knowledge; and they have to do, of course, with the essential interests of each and every human being. It is the *relevance* of theology to real human living that matters to Father Davis; and it is his grasp of this point that makes his plea for getting theology to the 'creative centres' of modern culture – the universities in particular – so convincing: 'theology . . . needs the university so that it will ask the right questions, the questions that keep it at the growing points of human knowledge and within the consciousness of contemporary man'.

There is little space to speak of the other contributions. After the above statement of principles we are given four surveys of how theology actually gets done in British universities: one by a

Presbyterian (Professor J. K. S. Reid), two by Anglicans (the Revd David Jenkins and Canon Alan Richardson), one by a Catholic (Mgr H. F. Davis). Much of the best of these papers, to my mind, is Mr Jenkins's on the situation in contemporary Oxford: a very sophisticated, entirely disillusioned and yet deeply Christian facing up to realities; a most valuable piece which Catholics should study carefully. By comparison Canon Richardson's paper, though very interesting on the most recent changes of mentality among theological students, seemed to me on the whole rather undistinguished; and both Professor Reid's and Mgr Davis's in their different ways, rather facile and unrealistic. It is disappointing, for example, to find Mgr Davis apparently restricting (pp. 179–181) the possibilities of useful dialogue between theologians and the university milieu only to those sections of the latter composed of 'orthodox Christians' (if not necessarily Catholics); and showing a dislike of abstract thinking in theology (on the question-begging ground that one doesn't wish 'to identify God with mathematics') which in the long run, it seems to me, could only lead to theology's losing all fruitful contact with philosophy and natural science (such contact as Professor Körner and Dr Kenny, especially the latter, vividly show the benefits of in their contributions).

These two last-mentioned papers are given as examples of the 'dialogue' that may be expected to arise when theologians meet non-theologians in a university setting; and follow one between Dom Illtyd Trethowan and Professor L. C. Knights, on the relevance of poetry to natural religion, where incidentally it is piquant to see the theologian, not his interlocutor, maintaining that there may be a purely aesthetic experience even of the greatest poetry, which as such says nothing about human life at all; whereas for Professor Knights 'imagination' (i.e. poetry) is . . . simply life coming

to consciousness'. An interesting disagreement; and let us not complain that its relevance to theology isn't obvious: why should all such relevance be so? Here in any case we are nearing the end of a most rewarding book: in fact the only thing left to praise is Mr Simon Clements's moving account of his discovery – born of personal experience as a teacher of Cockney children in a

non-Catholic comprehensive secondary school – of the modern Christian layman's crying need of theology. Mr Clements is young, discontented and demanding; and he brings us back to our common starting-point – human beings and human responsibilities.

Kenelm Foster, O.P.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND WORLD RELIGION by R. C. Zaehner, *Burns and Oates (Faith and Fact) 9s 6d.*

The aim of Professor Zaehner's book is to see, acknowledge and welcome the mysterious operation of the Holy Spirit whenever it is to be found; to examine its traces in world religions other than Christianity and to show where these traces are fulfilled in Catholic theory, and where they may bring fulfilment in Catholic practice. This is a very large undertaking for a small volume, but it is carried out with deep though unobtrusive learning, and with a limpid clarity of exposition. The religions of law, and of behaviour in time, Judaism, Islam, some forms of Protestantism, are discussed, and Islam is contrasted in detail with the religions of contemplation, seeking experience of the timeless. The author points out the great variety of goals formulated by different cults. The Vedantist is anxious to know his own identity with the Supreme Self, the Buddhist takes practical measures to prevent rebirth into this world of painful illusion, the Taoist yields to an almost Franciscan wonder at the welling up of creation 'humble and precious and pure', the Moslem worships the terrifying transcendence of God, the practitioner of the shock-therapy school of Zen attempts by non-rational violence to deliver himself from the tyranny of use and went into enlightenment. But what else could be expected? If even sensory perception is conditioned by the

way in which a man has learned to interpret the data presented to him, how much more must the given awareness of 'deep but dazzling darkness' flow inevitably into traditional channels of explanation. Nevertheless Professor Zaehner shows the development alike in Mahayana Buddhism, in the Bhakti cults of Hinduism and among the Sūfis in Islam, of an understanding of the love of God for man, and man for God.

He distinguishes three kinds of mystical experience: nature mysticism; the sense of identity with God; and the love of God. He cannot long conceal his curious animus against the first, that sudden sense of the glory and significance of created things which sings through Traherne and Wordsworth, and the early chapters of Dom Bede Griffiths' *The Golden String*. He accounts for the second and 'an experience of the soul as the image of God' (the soul as spirit, distinct from the psyche) and suggests that 'a jealous God' sets it as a 'trap' for those inclined to spiritual pride. This concept of Deity as a petty-minded practical joker trying to trip up those who seek him in ignorance is surely rather blasphemous. The third experience is of course the fulfilment of all human longings.

It is an amazing achievement to have packed so much thought, erudition and flowing argument