

occurs to one that a man of his intelligence would hardly make so platitudinous a remark. The remark then returns to obscurity.

I here resort to caricature. I have already acknowledged that Moore often does us a service in helping to strip us of false imagery. Nevertheless there seems to me a real obscurity at the centre of the book. The difficulty is to determine whether or not Moore wishes to analyze religious statements into the simply expressive. For example, at one point he attempts to illuminate statements about God by contrasting a physical line with the line of the Equator. His idea is that God stands to an object (a 'something') as the Equator stands to a physical line. Now the line of the Equator, I had always thought, is entirely imaginary. It is a device for expressing certain facts which can be appreciated as accurately, if not as conveniently, without using the notion at all. Is the same point supposed to apply to the notion of God? Later, he shifts his comparison, using the idea of a sensation, such as pain. His point in making the comparison is, again, to show that God is not a something. For pain is not a something. Possibly; but neither, in the manner of the Equator, is it a nothing. The pain of another is plainly for me an objective fact. Or, to put it another way, it is an *object* of my thought, not simply in the sense that I think about it but also in the sense that it would exist whether I thought about it or not. Moreover some of us would hope, if our faith is not to be in vain, that the same, at least, might be said of God. The difficulty is to see whether Moore agrees.

H.O. MOUNCE

THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION, BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION, EUCHARIST by Liam G. Walsh OP, *Geoffrey Chapman Theology Library*, London. 1988. Pp. 303.

This book is everything that an up-to-date text-book of theology should be. Excellent; both readable and systematic, with full bibliography and useful index. What's more, it's a text-book that deliberately declares its own insufficiency, so to say. At the end of each chapter, as in all the volumes of this series, are a number of 'Study Questions'. But Fr Walsh's study questions are in a class of their own; real; stern examination questions, which cannot be answered simply from a reading of the chapter to which they are appended. That chapter, like the book as a whole, simply points the student to areas to be explored by further research and study. At the same time, if you are only an interested reader, with no intention of cudgelling your brains over the study questions, the successive chapters will tell you all you want (or need) to know about baptism, confirmation and eucharist.

In his Introduction Fr Walsh puts the sacraments in the wider anthropological context of religious cultic symbolism. His three key words, introduced here, and structurally controlling the whole book, are 'rite', 'word' and 'life'. The interaction of these, he says, is a common object of study by the anthropological sciences, and in our present world these sciences have to be noticed seriously by theology. However, the author in no way subordinates his theology of the sacraments to anthropological categories. His book remains a work of Catholic theology, not one of religious studies investigating the phenomenon of Catholic Christian cultic

practices.

In the next three chapters he gives us what in older text-books would be called 'On sacraments in general', and he does it with one chapter on the biblical background, one on the history of the concept 'sacrament/mystery', and one on the theology of sacrament. This is the pattern which he follows in the rest of the book, when dealing with each of the three sacraments in turn. Each has two chapters devoted to it—those on the eucharist rather longer than the ones on baptism and confirmation put together. There is thus a chapter on 'Baptism: the rite' and one on 'Baptism: the word'—and so also for the other two sacraments. Each chapter on '—: the word' concludes with a systematic essay, though both baptism and confirmation have appendices tacked onto their essays, dealing with tangential questions.

The word that gradually crept into my mind as I read on in the book was 'judicious'. If this sounds like damning with faint praise, that is certainly not how I mean it. In this case it means you can rely on the author to give you a perfectly *fair* account of different points of view, yet without being merely neutral himself, and sitting on the fence. His own *judgment*—always judicious—is never in doubt. Thus it is always a Catholic judgment, though the book is splendidly ecumenical in tone.

In this respect I have one slight grouse. In setting out the theological tradition on the sacraments Fr Walsh is not, in my opinion, informative enough about the tradition of the Eastern non-Latin Churches. Perhaps this indicates a certain lacuna in his own interests, which may be what leads him to an unfortunate, but also uncharacteristic, lapse on p. 180 (the eucharist is the subject), where he writes, 'The Roman liturgy embodies the particular historical experience of the Roman Catholic Church'. Surely he should have written '... of the Roman, Latin Church'. A glance at the index reveals references to Orthodox Churches on 6 pages, while Protestants get the benefit of being referred to on 33 pages.

And yet for all that, it is clear that Fr Walsh is of the judicious opinion that in many respects (for instance, in keeping the three sacraments of initiation together in one continuous ceremony of initiation) the Eastern Churches have been more faithful to the authentic Catholic tradition than the Latin Church.

In his dedication and acknowledgments Fr Walsh thanks his confrère Fr Paul O'Leary for his assistance, and adds 'but he still thinks my ecclesiology is a bit too hierarchical!' This puts me immediately on the alert, as my own very definite preference is for an ecclesiology in which 'hierarchy' is seen as a purely accidental adjunct to the absolutely essential concept of 'brotherhood' ('siblinghood'?—Fr Walsh is punctiliously non-sexist in his language).

But I didn't succeed in finding any substantial justification of Fr O'Leary's criticism. I would refer him to p. 154, where Confirmation and Order (not 'Orders', surely, if one is to be scrupulously correct) are being compared, and where what I would call a fraternal model of the Church is explicitly preferred to a hierarchical one. Judicious to the last! But perhaps in the weight he still accords to the ordained priesthood, Fr Walsh is a bit too judicious for extremists like Paul O' Leary — and me.

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