

book takes its title, Mr Westow sees the present agony of the Christian churches as consisting in a process of shedding the old layers of comforting securities, and a commitment to the true mission of the Church, on which she will be judged, namely, that of bearing witness to the standards of Christ's love in the relevance of our time. This theme runs through the other twelve essays, and accounts for the strong sense of dealing with real problems, that, combined with his sense of history and considerable native perception, make Theo Westow such an exciting writer. Only over his assessment of the Catholic public schools would I like to modify any of Mr Westow's comments. He rightly points to the insularity of attitude and milita-

ristic assumptions which to some extent still pervade these institutions. But he might also have shown how some of the institutions involved, especially the Benedictines and the Jesuits, have been saved from the worst excesses of the public school syndrome by their close contact with industrial working-class areas through their parochial work in such places as South Lancashire, Preston, Cumberland and Northumberland. This has ensured that many O.S.B.s and S.J.s have been kept in contact with reality through constant movements from, say, Ampleforth to Warrington, or from Stonyhurst to Manchester, and vice versa.

ÆLRED BURROWS, O.S.B.

**AGAINST ALL REASON**, by Geoffrey Moorhouse. *Weidenfeld and Nicholson*. 436 pp. 63s.

One of the more important consequences of Church renewal, sanctioned or even inaugurated by Vatican II, has been the *official* ending of a whole variety of styles of theological thinking and practice. This has been particularly so in the areas of Ecclesiology, Church/World relations, Liturgy, Ecumenism and (importantly for understanding the significance of some of the findings of this book) Religious Life. The development in the theology of the laity (witnessed to in *Lumen Gentium*, for example) has dealt a death-blow to that theological language which gave the religious a privileged and élitist position in the Church, which offered the religious life as the better, more secure way of saving your soul, the life of perfection, and so on. In retrospect one can see that this shift would inevitably lead to a massive soul-searching among religious and an equally massive exodus from religious communities and a dramatic fall in vocations. This Angst had, of course, been with religious orders for some time, but the really dramatic period has been from the Second Vatican Council up to now and one presumes that it will go on for some time yet. This book is an attempt to analyse and record the present state of affairs in that strange world in which men and women live 'against all reason'; an apt and attractive title.

Of course, the task Geoffrey Moorhouse sets himself is an impossible one. You cannot hope to write adequately 'about the religious life in its technical sense', or take a 'last look at a deeply traditional way of life that may not be with us much longer' in 240 pages (pp. 243 to the end are taken up with Bibliography, Appendices and Index). The spectrum is too

broad, the tradition too long, the styles of life too numerous and diffuse. But he does succeed by a clever, kaleidoscopic, journalistic style (though that at times is irritatingly gossipy) in giving us the flavour of the present scene. Throughout the book one has the sense that the traditional orders are being measured by two modern orders which have clearly impressed the author, the Taizé community and the Little Brothers of Jesus. The first chapter is devoted entirely to a good and moving description of the history and life of Taizé, though marred for me by the 'whiff of incense and damp wool' Muggeridge-type language of his description of the liturgy: 'As he raises his torch the wide sleeves of his white cassock fall away down his arms and his shadow trembles huge against the yellowed backdrop . . .', etc. (p. 12).

For me, the best parts of the book were in chapters 6-8 where he discusses the areas which give religious life its classical definition, the vows and prayer, and Moorhouse puts his finger on what must now seem a very raw spot in the religious malaise. There can be little doubt that certain recommended interpretations of the vows have had a constricting and suffocating effect on the lives of many religious. The trivialization and tedious legalism of obedience: 'It would not . . . be disobedience to refuse to keep a fast to death imposed by an imprudent superior' (p. 157, quoted from a commentary on Obedience published in 1953). The aridity and puritanism of chastity: 'It was in 1965 that a novice-mistress replied, when a postulant asked her some question about sex, "I do not speak of such things. I am a virgin"' (p. 167). And poverty, on the one hand its

hollowness, as witnessed to by the sumptuous food a certain Benedictine community enjoys (p. 101)—though I doubt if this is peculiar to that monastery—and on the other hand the confusion of poverty with inefficiency, like the English convent whose constitutions forbid anything other than soda for use in washing clothes (p. 164).

The question is, of course, is the religious life doomed to extinction? The figures given by Geoffrey Moorhouse are daunting enough to make considerable contraction a certainty: for example, the unofficial estimate that 2,000 nuns abandoned their vows in the United States in 1967, and the 50 per cent drop in the number of American Trappists in ten years or so. His gloomy figures for the English Dominican drop-out (40 per cent in five years) are not accurate, however. He has been misled by the *Catholic Directory*, which did not include English Dominicans working in South Africa. The challenge has been taken up by many orders, though the response of some betrays a panicky loss of nerve and superficial 'with-it' reformism. Like the connivance of the Dutch Dominican superiors in two of their novices studying

agriculture rather than theology (p. 222). Or the incredibly liberalist and apolitical view of religious life and Christianity witnessed to by the highly praised (and rightly!) founders of Taizé and the Little Brothers: 'Together they have rejected the idea of converting, in any accepted sense, the agnostic or half-believing world. . . . Together they have argued that the Christian duty in the world is unself-consciously to take the next man as you find him and to offer him everything in the way of care and affection that he wants: nothing more or less' (p. 223). The religious' mission to the world is rooted in his vows and prayer life and it is in this basic and difficult area that most of the radical reevaluation of the religious life has to start, but it is a task that can be conveniently avoided by a giddy rush into activism. Geoffrey Moorhouse strikes the correct note on page 180: 'The religious life at present is on the change and it is not a comfortable time for anybody except the ones with unshakable calm and self-possession and hope, with a certain faith and a capacity to endure all things.'

ALBAN WESTON, O.P.

**IN DEFENCE OF FREE WILL**, by C. A. Campbell. *George Allen & Unwin, London, 1967. 275 pp. 45s.*

This is a collection of philosophical papers by Professor Campbell published over a recent period of 30 years. All are worth reading, but the three chapters on Free Will are perhaps the most important, and this review is concerned with them alone.

We are often in situations of choice between alternatives in which we feel sure (1) that we can do X; (2) that we can do Y; (3) that we can choose between them. And by 'can' we do not mean 'can if . . .' but just 'can'. When we have chosen and done X we say 'I could have chosen and done Y instead', not 'I could have if . . .' ('if I had been a better man', or 'if I had had a stronger will') but 'I could have' meaning 'I was able to'. This, which we may call the common sense view, has often come under attack by philosophers, but Professor Campbell stoutly resists all attempts to water down its claims, or to suggest that anything short of them would suffice to ground our notion of moral responsibility for our actions.

It is customary to attack the common sense view on the following lines: a choice issuing in action is an event in the causal order, hence an effect determined by its total cause, which will obviously include factors in the agent's nature for which he is not fully responsible; or

else it is uncaused, in which case responsibility for it cannot be assigned. In either case the notion of absolute personal freedom of choice and the claim that one could, in any absolute sense, have acted otherwise than he did, are both empty.

In reply it may be admitted that human choices are subject to causal law, but argued that the only freedom presupposed by the notion of moral responsibility is freedom from compulsion, and that this is compatible with subjection to causal law. It may also be conceded that 'could have acted otherwise' should be understood, not in a categorical, but in a hypothetical sense, which is all we need for moral responsibility. Mr Nowell-Smith, for example, has suggested that in order to hold someone morally responsible for an action we need only claim that he could have acted otherwise had he been a different sort of man, or if he had been differently placed; and Moore was inclined to think that all we mean by saying that a person could have acted otherwise is that he *would* have acted otherwise *if* he had chosen to.

Professor Campbell is not prepared to make any of these concessions. He convincingly rejects the views of Mr Nowell-Smith and