

bed of murders, often in the most familiar parts of our liturgy? John XXIII's action with relation to the Good Friday prayers obviously sprang from a compassionate and historically informed conscience. But, following on from this, how can we go on, year after year, solemnly reciting the sadistic and unscriptural Station of the Cross in which our children hear it proclaimed that the Jews 'fearing He would die on the way, whereas they wished Him to die the ignominious death of the Cross, constrained Simon the Cyrenean to carry the Cross behind Our Lord'? And all the Passiontide references in St John's Gospel to the generalized 'the Jews' which need so much contextual explication, blithely trotted out in sermons without the

restrictive warnings they require. One of the reasons why anti-semitism is an endemic condition in Europe and its heirs is the complacent anti-Jewishness which runs uncritically through some of our popular devotions; and, in the case of France, in many school manuals, as Fr. Demann has so amply shown in his work on French catechisms. How can this fail to have given an impulse to ostracism and worse on peoples who were not subtle enough to theologise about what they were hearing?

So let us think twice about the sigh of relief we undoubtedly heave when we read M. Leevai's important little book. The evil is still with us.

LOUIS ALLEN

LIGHT ON THE NATURAL LAW edited and introduced by Iltud Evans, O.P. *Compass Books, London; Burns and Oates, 10s 6d.*

This book consists of an Introduction by the editors, and five papers, beginning with The Traditional Concept of Natural Law by Fr Columba Ryan, O.P. There follow papers by an historian of Political Theory, by a lawyer, by a doctor, and by an anthropologist. All are concerned to establish whether there is a universal natural law. While discussion about natural law continues to be focused on its precepts, the confusion that bedevils it will also continue.

First, to call a view based on St Thomas a traditional view is somewhat ironic. St Thomas is now in eclipse again. He has always been in eclipse. Sir Francis Walshe points out (p. 95) that 'the scholastic philosophy of the middle ages did not preserve the clarity and renown lent to it by St Thomas Aquinas'. The scholastics including the Thomists descended upon his writings like a bomb disposal unit and took out the detonator. What indeed would have been the subsequent history of thought if St Thomas had had the slightest influence! Not only should we have been spared the sort of casuistry that Sir Francis Walshe here exposes so adroitly; we might have been spared Moral Theology itself. It should never have become detached from theology to circle like a satellite in dubious association with Canon Law.

The concept of natural law as found in St Thomas is an analogous concept (not equivocal as suggested on p. 10). Unfortunately for later clarity, it spans two different fields, the moral and the legal properly so called. These are not incommensurable but they are separate (a court of law is not a court of morals). The principal analogue is civil law which after a period of

gestation comes into being by enactment and promulgation. In the case of natural law quite the reverse is true. Natural law is in being from the first awareness of 'ought', without which no human act would have integrity. Though defined as '*dictamen practicae rationis*', it is part of a homogeneous process, and even this dictate is only a midway point in the whole process of transforming the first intuition of 'ought' into individual acts. The dictate is not exclusively the moment when natural law comes into being, and stays in being; it is part of a living process: here is the source of confusion. Civil law of its nature should be judged by the content of its enactments. To do the same with natural law is to disregard its nature. For a common lawyer to look at natural law through his own spectacles is little better than Chesterton's figure of fun who tried to dig up the square root of four with a spade. Dr Walshe criticises the casuists for being abstract, whatever that word means. I hope he would not extend the same criticism to St Thomas' concept of natural law. There is nothing abstract about the immediate insight that gives to human living its specifically human dimension, where man is master in his own house, made in the image and likeness of God, with his own life as his creation.

This book shows, amongst other things, what little agreement there is amongst the theorists (Bernice Hamilton); how far the casuists are from being of any help to doctors faced with immediate situations (Sir Francis Walshe); on the other hand Fr Philip Ekka, who has a very clear view of the limits of his field of enquiry, shows what remarkable results are to be had

when people are studied instead of theories.

Even where the dictates of conscience differ from age to age and from man to man, they are still dictates of conscience. Error in judgement does not always rob the conscientious judgement of its value and authority. It would be all too easy to overstate this, but in a world where certainty too frequently is drowned in a sea of conflicting opinion, it is worth noting that St Thomas was able to show how the sting is taken out of human error in the daily business of human living without condoning it. He was a theologian, one whose function it is to state in human terms the truths of the love and mercy of God.

In his closing paragraph Fr Columba Ryan raises the second great issue: the relationship

between the natural law and the teaching authority of the Church. He very tentatively suggests that 'when the Church invokes the natural law, it is not by way of appeal so much as by way of affirmation'. Even in an atmosphere where the nature and function of infallibility is such an open question, this seems unduly cautious. But to assert it roundly would not close the question. When has the Church made such affirmations, and about what? Canon Drinkwater in *Birth Control and the Natural Law* (Burns and Oates), with a very different audience in mind, discusses one of them, 'and shows how a change in the Church's position would be in harmony with a general development of doctrine that is already taking place'.

MARK BROCKLEHURST, O.P.

THE FUTURE OF CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY. Ed. Michael de la Bedoyere. *Constable*, 21s.

During the time in which I have been, with disgraceful slowness, addressing myself to the task of writing a review of this book, I have been conscientiously refraining from reading anyone else's reviews. But I understand from various conversational sources that, since I am strongly averse to finding myself a target for tedious correspondence, I shall be well advised to say nothing whatever of the first and third essays.

I now have to acknowledge, rather weakly, that I am not going to try to talk about all the rest either. An assembly of unrelated individual utterances cannot be reviewed as a whole, and I do not see that each of these items merits a separate review. The most I can do is to give some reactions and comments. In my opinion, then, the allotting of male and female roles in every department of life as done here by Bernardine Bishop, is not the best way of considering human relationships. Nor am I able to understand Mr Westow's enthusiasm over the (inevitably) platitudinous message of the Pope to the United Nations. Daniel Callahan is, as one would expect, straightforwardly informative and illuminating about American Catholic liberals, and Archbishop Roberts, equally predictably, warm and sympathetic on the subject of a mixed but genuinely Christian marriage. The two essays which I found very depressing, while entirely respectable, were those of Mr Brech and Mr Watkin.

Mr Brech's is a scheme for totally integrating the Church into the affluent capitalist society so that its interests shall be her interests and her values conformed to its values. This is certainly

not his only concern: he is, for instance, admirably concerned with responsible lay participation in the normal administration of the affairs of the People of God. But I remain disappointed that an exceptionally competent Christian economist, who might be helping us to find a way out of our present prison of idealised and systematised economic selfishness and towards a fulfilment of our primary obligation towards the third world, should instead be planning for the Church, as an institution, to repeat, with the greatest possible efficiency, the mistake and betrayal of identifying herself with the unjust social structures which she should be challenging with the Gospel and shattering with the impact of the new creation.

As for Mr Watkin, it would be an impertinence on my part to try to sum up and dismiss his essay. It contains innumerable insights for which I am grateful. It also assumes, it seems to me, an extreme dualism which I deplore. It bewilders me that anyone can seriously think that the Church of the apostles and the immediately following centuries simply wasn't ever doing, in her liturgy, the things that truly expressed her true nature (I find it relatively easy to see that she might subsequently lose and corrupt that truly appropriate expression of herself); when Mr Watkin says that 'only a liturgical language stylised and archaic is fitted to suggest the numinous', I can only suppose that he feels the apostles should have given the early Church a Hebrew liturgy. But I truly do not want to quarrel. I only want to ask Mr Watkin to try to believe that there are people