

Commentary

THE CATHOLIC PRESS. This country is almost unique in having a Catholic weekly press that is national in scope and under lay control. The four English Catholic weeklies have notably grown in seriousness during the last few years: they have shed much of the partisan and parochial accent that made them so often the subject of not-so-good-natured derision. Increasingly they have accepted the true dimensions of Christian opinion and judgment. It is for that reason regrettable that the attempt made by the archdiocese of Birmingham to have its 'own' weekly—a tabloid of diocesan snapshots—should now be copied by Liverpool, as though to confirm the impression that Catholics are much better occupied hearing about the new shrine at St Patrick's than about the progress of the Council. For these diocesan sheets, whatever their publishers may say, are necessarily rivals to the established weeklies, and substitute the cosy gossip of the men's club for an adult survey of the Church's larger mission.

Of course local news is necessary and good, but not at the expense of the larger look—nor, one may add, of the lay look, either. In this country we have fortunately been spared the dreariness of anti-clericalism of the European sort. And that has been largely so because the religious press is not an organ under chancery orders. Certainly the popular Catholic papers are not wanting in respect for the hierarchy: the sort of language that was normal in *The Tablet* of a century ago in condemnation of 'episcopal stupidity' would seem a sort of *lèse majesté* to-day. But lay ownership—and lay editorship no less—is a test of the Church's sincerity in according to laymen the responsibility that is properly theirs. It is an occupational disease of the clergy to encumber themselves with financial and organizational burdens which fall much more suitably on shoulders trained to receive them. And the history of the Church in so many countries and at such different epochs has always vindicated Newman's remark, that 'in all times the laity have been the measure of the Catholic spirit'. It would be sad if it seemed that 'the age of the layman' in this country should see any diminution of the trust that the bishops must want to accord to them.

A VERNACULAR COMMENT. The recent publication of the *Extracts from the Roman Ritual* for use in England and Wales raises the interesting matter of Roman replies to regional questions. What has been accorded

to the hierarchy in this country in terms of the use of the vernacular is substantially less than that allowed to other countries: even Ireland is better off. An arcane preface by the Archbishop of Birmingham explains the history of the affair, and it has to be admitted that the special history of the Church in this country has identified the use of Latin with Catholic orthodoxy to a degree unknown elsewhere. 'Devotion to our martyrs', 'our penal history': such arguments for opposing an extension of the vernacular are of course meaningless in other countries, and are perhaps not so meaningful here any more. It is hard to see, for instance, how the total retention of Latin for funerals preserves any important principle when English is allowed for most of the sacrament of baptism. And the form for the reception of converts into the Church, which has a much greater pastoral importance for this country than, say, for Italy or Spain, would seem quite specially to call for the use of English. Rome is by no means the monolithic steam-roller that some of its critics assume it to be, and the liturgical reforms of recent years have arisen from pastoral needs that have been realized by local hierarchies—those of France and Germany in particular—and, in turn, Rome has implemented them. In the case of regional rituals, the nature of the case means a variety of practice, and its regularization by Roman authority has depended, one must suppose, on how powerful a case has been made by the petitioners. The urgency of the whole question of the vernacular is presumably a matter that the preparatory commissions for the Council are considering. In the meantime, the piecemeal solutions in different countries largely reflect different stages of pastoral awakening.

PREJUDICE—AND PRIDE. In his recent Cohen lecture to the Council of Christians and Jews, Dr David Stafford-Clark took as his subject 'The Psychology of Persecution and Prejudice'. It is, in its published form, a document of profound importance, and, at a time when the uneasy conscience of mankind stirs afresh at the aftermath of the Eichmann trial, a reminder of how personal a problem a universal disease must be made to be. Dr Stafford-Clark has little difficulty in exposing the arguments for segregation as the dangerous fallacies they are. He brings the resources of his own professional insight to bear on the psychological foundations of attitudes that perpetuate hatred and malice and fear. He argues fearlessly for intermarriage between all human races as 'biologically, and I dare to suggest, spiritually, not only defensible but right'. It is only thus, ultimately, that prejudice can be destroyed, for 'persecution arises not primarily out of bitter situations,

not out of frictions of human proximity or distrust, which varies by distance, but simply out of the will of living man to think more highly of himself than he ought to think'. That is why the larger problem can only be met by the individual acceptance of what in fact Christian charity must mean: 'we must learn to love others as ourselves; unless we do this, we not only doom others but are doomed ourselves. But if we can do this there is no problem of racial or any other kind of prejudice which need overwhelm our judgment'.

Delinquency—A Sub-cultural Hypothesis

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There are many approaches to the problem of juvenile delinquency and its causation, but in a rough and ready fashion it is possible to divide these approaches into two main groups. On the one hand are those who see delinquency as stemming from personality disturbances or emotional conflicts, and on the other are those who view delinquency as coming from relatively normal personalities which have been exposed to an 'abnormal' environment such as a deviant sub-culture in which the individual learns to be a non-conformist as others learn to be conformists.

If one is to judge from recent writings in criminology, the conflict between these two approaches is still quite intense. This is unfortunate, for apart from vested interests and professional pride there is no real reason why the two approaches should not be regarded as complementary. That I have taken sub-cultures as my theme in this article does not mean that I consider this approach to be more fundamental or more fruitful than others, still less does it mean that I consider it to be the only one. It does mean, however, that I think that it is necessary to stress the wider social factors, the part played by society as a whole, in the delinquency equation and to draw attention to the fallacies of attributing all delinquent responses to inadequate socialization and of viewing