

'renew their baptismal vows', and, negatively, to renounce what is anti-Christ and, positively, to re-affirm their Christian faith, and to see the blessing of that water which is to serve for the year's baptisms! We wish some similar reminder of Confirmation could be devised—no Sacrament more easily forgotten! Much of the book deals with the Liturgy, which not only expresses our sentiments, but should create them—it is (so to say) a super-sacramental: all the more should we understand it and actively participate in it: the still all-too-prevalent sentiment was expressed by the Borstal boys who, when taught how to 'answer' collectively at Mass, exclaimed: 'But are we *allowed* to do that?'

It is very valuable to be reminded that Mass (and therefore the Liturgy) causes Christ no more to be but a memory but still living and active. Have we become too inclined to think that 'Do this as a commemoration of *Me*' refers only to the 'consummation' on the Cross? The Liturgy does not want us to think like that: immediately after the Consecration, we indeed declare that we are mindful of our Lord's 'so blessed Passion', but at once proceed, 'but also (*sed et . . .*) of his Resurrection—yes, and (*nec non*) of his Ascension too'. The Easter Liturgy, lovingly described in chapter 4, leads up to the Christian triumph not only hoped for, but (if we accept it) at work within us. (Still, we have got to *hope*: does our spiritual life include a longing for the Parousia? For the splendour and misery of this world becoming the Kingdom of God and of his Christ?) In his last chapter Fr Illtud confronts the question of how 'charity' can survive in a 'Welfare State'. The more regimented life becomes, the more an army of clerks takes over the care of the sick, the poor, the aged—all the departments of human life—the more do officials need to 'baptize' their work. And an incalculable amount of 'work' remains to be done: pensions do not render old people any the less lonely; no legislation can turn an unhappy home into a happy one, or de-teddify the adolescent. No examination can create a true teacher. But if the Holy Spirit inhabits us, he will communicate himself through us even if we do no more than offer our fellow-human yet another printed form. *Congregabit nos in unum*—it is the love of Christ, permeating us through the indwelling of his Spirit, which alone can make the many into one.

C. C. MARTINDALE, S.J.

RICHES DESPISED: A STUDY OF THE ROOTS OF RELIGION. By Conrad Pepler, O.P. (Blackfriars Publications; 12s.)

It is not at all easy to criticize this book. Father Conrad has touched on a subject which goes so deep and whose implications are so vast, that it is impossible to do justice to it in a review. I believe, in fact,

that he has touched upon the central problem of religion in our time. The problem with which we are faced is not simply that of the revolt of western man against the Church or against Christianity or even against God; it is the loss of what may be called the root of all religion, the sense of the sacred, of the holy. Until the present century mankind all over the world has always lived with a sense of a threefold bond of relationship between man and nature and the ultimate ground of the existence of man and nature, which is known by different names in different parts of the world, but which we in the west are accustomed to call God. It is true that there have often been rationalists who have attempted to break this bond and separate man from nature and from God, but it is only within the present century that it has become possible for this to be done on a large scale. As a result we are witnessing a loss of all religious sense not only in western Europe, Russia and America, but also in countries like China and India which were until a few years ago rooted in the ancient tradition of religion.

The cause of this Father Conrad believes to be the loss of contact with nature, which has been brought about by the industrial revolution. As long as man lived in immediate dependence on nature he was always deeply aware of his dependence on the divine Ground of all nature, and his constant effort was to bring everything into relation with this divine Ground. Everything in life had to be made 'sacred', to be rescued from the state of the 'profane' if it was to conform to the law of nature. Thus in an ancient culture, as one can see in India still, every event in life has a sacred character, eating and drinking, bathing and dressing, and above all marriage and all sexual relationships. It is this sense of the sacred which underlies all religion from the most primitive to the most mature.

Now Christianity, as Father Conrad shows, was no exception to this rule. The religion of Israel had its roots in this ancient tradition, and the great festivals of the Pasch and Pentecost, for instance, never lost their link with the primeval festivals of the Spring and the Harvest. In the same way the Christian sacraments with their symbols of water and oil and wine and bread kept the Church in continual contact with nature and with the ancient religion of nature, and the Christian liturgy grew up among people who shared this rhythm of life. But now all this has been changed. Man has lost contact with nature; bread and wine and oil now mean nothing to him; they have lost all 'sacred' significance. The result is that the liturgy, and not only the liturgy but also the Bible with all its riches of traditional imagery and symbolism, have lost their meaning. They have ceased to have any apparent link with daily life.

Such, according to Father Conrad, is the reason for the loss of the

sense of religion. We are living in a world which for the first time in history is utterly 'profane', and the average man can therefore find no place for religion in it. How can we recover this sense of the 'sacredness' of life? How can we bring back religion into the daily life of 'eating and drinking and giving in marriage'? This is the problem, and I think that Father Conrad comes very near to the right answer. He sees it as a problem of restoring the order of nature. We cannot hope to have a religious life, a religious culture, until we have recovered the basis of a natural life and a natural culture. This means, of course, that there must be a radical change in our present industrial civilization—a change which it may take a hydrogen bomb to produce. But we have no reason to wait for such a catastrophe. Modern man has still contact with nature at many points. Above all there is the family. Wherever you have a home and a family and a common table where people meet to take food together, you have the basis of a natural and also a religious life. Many people also still have their gardens and allotments, their holidays and hobbies where they make contact with a natural way of life.

It is on this basis of a natural sacramental life, that the religious life has to be built. The life of the Church must be seen as an extension of this natural family life, in which the order of nature is taken up into the life of grace by means of the sacraments, which belong as it were to both worlds. Father Conrad has much to say on the value of the Benedictine life as expressing this solidarity of nature and grace. In the typical Benedictine monastery the work in the fields and the workshops, the meals in the refectory and the recreations, are all seen as integral elements in a life of religion, of which the liturgy with its symbolism taken from nature and from the natural forms of human existence is the centre.

As a Benedictine I naturally share Father Conrad's view; but at the same time I think that there is a certain danger in this outlook. It is true that 'grace perfects nature', as St Thomas says, but the phrase is somewhat equivocal. It suggests that grace perfects nature in its own order. But this is surely not true. Grace perfects nature by raising it to a new order of being, and before nature can enter this new order of being it has to die. The mystery of Christianity is the mystery of death and resurrection. It is true that Father Conrad recognizes the fundamental need of the Cross in the transformation of our life which is required, but perhaps he does not sufficiently stress the radical transformation which nature has to undergo in this process. I think that if he had, he would have been more just to St Anthony and the Fathers of the Desert, who with all their asceticism were aiming precisely at the restoration of the 'order of nature', that is the state of man before the Fall.

Perhaps the answer to this problem is to stress the need of a psychological conversion. It is not so much contact with external nature which is required, though that is necessary, as the recovery of contact with our own inner nature. We have to discover the hidden depths of the unconscious in our own souls and to allow grace to penetrate not only the reason and the will, but our whole being, conscious and unconscious, body and soul. It is in these hidden depths of the unconscious that the springs of religion are to be found, and it is only when we have 'died' to our own superficial reason and consciousness that we shall be able to discover this root of the 'sacred' and the 'holy', which has been lost.

Father Conrad has written a very wise and also a very practical book. His chapter of 'suggestions' will be found of value to everyone who is seeking an integrated life in our present disintegrated society, and his chapter on 'Dislocations in the Religious Life' will be read with profit by all religious. It is a book to be read by all who are seriously concerned with the renewal of religion in the modern world.

BEDE GRIFFITHS, O.S.B.

THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF JOHN HENRY NEWMAN. By Terence Kenny. (Longmans; 21s.)

LETTERS OF JOHN HENRY NEWMAN. A Selection Edited and Introduced by Muriel Spark and Derek Stanford. (Peter Owen; 25s.)

It is becoming ever more of an achievement to write something entirely new about Newman. Yet it has happened frequently in the last few years, and certainly Mr Kenny has succeeded. We have always been aware that Newman was a religious genius. There is now no question that he was a master in the field of education. Many people have written on various literary or philosophical aspects of Newman's work. But perhaps we least expected that someone would write a full-size book on his political thought.

This book is both important and interesting. If it seems to lack at times a certain clarity of exposition, this is due to the fact that it is the work of a pioneer in a vast, uncharted field, in which the subject, Newman, wrote no express treatise.

Of special importance would seem to be Mr Kenny's careful distinction between political conservatism and Toryism. He brings ample evidence to show that Newman was always a conservative in every sphere of thought, in the sense that he was convinced we should strive to preserve what is valuable even at the risk of slowness in destroying what is outdated. Newman was always distrustful of rebellion. But Mr Kenny also makes quite clear that Newman gradually came to realize that conservatism should not be confused and identified with the Tory party. Newman had already begun to emancipate