

the industrial towns was a light in a dark place and did perhaps more than anything else to show what Christianity can mean in practice.

If, then, we want to sum up what religious life of every sort must ultimately mean we are left with the word 'vocation', the call to serve God in a life that is dedicated by vow. And however much that life may vary, from the wholly contemplative life of the Cistercian monk in his cloister to the wholly active work of the Sister, who may even nowadays have no special form of dress to distinguish her, the source is always the same: a love of God and our neighbour for his sake that evokes this generous and sacrificial response. And it can never be mere utility that can be the standard of its worth. The hidden life of the Carmelite nun avails for each one of us at this moment: her prayers, her mortification, are offered for you and for me. The point really is that we are members one of another, and the religious orders, of every sort and condition, exist to say that this is true.

FATHER HUDDLESTONE AND SOUTH AFRICA

FINBAR SYNOTT, O.P.

FATHER HUDDLESTONE has become a great centre of controversy, and it is most important to sort matters out carefully when considering his book.¹ It describes his experiences, particularly in the 'black spots' of Johannesburg, and gives views in judgment on South Africa and race relations in South Africa.

Most of the book is in the form of incidents showing the effect of discriminating laws on the African. As regards narrative matter, it is factual; although selected, it is not exaggerated. What he says of the African's hardships under the Pass Laws, the housing shortage and permit restrictions, the summary methods of the

1 *Nought For Your Comfort*, by Trevor Huddleston, C.R. (Collins; 12s. 6d.)

police and partial justice in magistrates' courts, is all a matter of daily experience in South Africa.² What he says of the *tsotsis*, gangsters who terrify the locations, is particularly good. In a system that stifles ambition, and provides no outlet for the animus of young men, they turn sour on society. Their crime list makes terrible reading, and seeing, if you are near it. But it is a social symptom rather than a moral matter. I have even known one who might be a sort of martyr for principle. He made one promise to his mother, never to use a knife. An argument at cards—and he was stabbed and killed outright, and curiously enough on the feast of his patron saint. Had he had a knife and practised with it he might be alive today. The descriptions of the broken careers and mental struggles of the more educated, their despair and frustration, are true. Father Huddleston has put his finger on the chief problem for a priest: 'God forgive me. I find myself giving advice that in those circumstances I could not follow . . . it needs heroic virtue.'

But his analysis of the causes of all this is another matter. To begin with much of the present tragic situation is not a matter for any special moral judgment or indignation, but due to South Africa having been handed over, by the Act of Union which ended the whole controversy of the South African war, to be ruled on an exactly fifty-fifty basis by two peoples whose whole way of life, religion and ideals, and in particular their attitude to social organization, were as diametrically opposed as any in the world. The Dutch were pastoral, Calvinist, 'council' ruled in religion and politics. The English were urbanized, liberal Protestant, and democratic—in their sense of the word. As time went on the vote and political power went chiefly to the Afrikaaner. Money influence was ninety per cent on the English-speaking side. The Afrikaaner wanted the natives separated into Reserves, except for those directly working for him. He believed in a vocation to conquer and guide the native in an Israelitish, Old Testament sense. The English mines and commerce drew the Natives into the towns. They were to be educated on the English liberalistic pattern, to be led into a brave new world of higher standards of living and the vote. The influences of money and the Afrikaans vote remained just about equal till the elections after the last war.

² Throughout this paper I have written chiefly of the African native. All that is said applies in degree to the Coloureds and Indians under discriminating laws.

The Africans were being administrated on two contradictory principles. The Afrikaaner still thinks that the best thing for the African would be to have separate countries, so he resists by law all development for Africans in our towns and society. The mines and businesses still drag more than half the native manhood of the country into their urban areas. Now things are so mixed, and influences so balanced, that the thing can not be sorted out, and the atavistic urges and horror stirred up by racial conflicts, every bitterness known to man, struggle over the body of the African. Moreover love of the Africans should not blind one to the fact that they are mostly still primitive, savage in the wildest manner when they riot, and in a great majority over the Europeans.

This should be brought out, to show the proper limitation of the element of moral judgment on South Africans of the present generation. Ordinary human beings have been faced with an extraordinary problem, and judgment should consider this—as it should consider the degree of blame on the *tsotsi*. Also the calming thought of St Augustine: that people who dominate suffer as much mentally by it as do the dominated. Father Huddleston has missed all this, and in the apportioning of what moral blame there is he is onesided. The present Government and the Law and Afrikaans Calvinist Theology are his chief villains, although he speaks of wider responsibility. 'There is no time to be lost in breaking the present Government.' Where is the parallel attack that should be made on the irresponsible greed of the English mining and business interests? When you have begun your experience by ministering in a disused cattle kraal to a native dying of miner's tuberculosis, too rotten to be kept in the village, sent home by the mines to die and spread the disease, you have other villains. By the lure of gold offered to primitive men—a method as bad as legal coercion—the mines and commerce have dragged natives from every tribe of Southern Africa to their compounds, separating them for most of their active life from their families. Sexual sin rampant in the compounds, children who never see their father at home, divorce and prostitution on gigantic scales, lands undeveloped: this is the work of the money interests. Factories throw off at a week-end a hundred men who must get work immediately in a saturated labour market, or be liable to deportation. Had Father Huddleston worked in the Reserves and Compounds this book might have been different in its basis

of experience. The very support given to him by the English-speaking press, which largely represents such interests, suggests the onesidedness of his approach. To 'break the Government' would not break the people either, and they, English and Afrikaans alike, support the system, demand native labour, and will not tolerate citizen rights offered to the African. The only voting alternative of the country, the United Party, works out much the same in practice. This is the tragedy of South Africa, that while the Dutch are Calvinistic and like harsh sayings, and the English are diplomatic and like smooth sayings, there is no will in either to make one of the choices that could bring peace: to separate and let the African have his own country, or to give him citizen rights in the one that exists. The idealists on both sides, who would make the necessary sacrifices, are a very small minority. But the cure will not be achieved by inviting the English-speaking world overseas, who would behave exactly the same in South Africa—do so behave when they go there—penitentially to beat the Afrikaans Government's breast. Has Father Huddleston thought of the moral danger of inviting people to sit in pharisaical judgment on others for doing exactly what they would do in the same circumstances?

Not only is there a deficient judgment here. There is a great miscalculation as to what the Afrikaaner will take from an Englishman and the representative of an English Church. He sees Kenya. He sees the Central African Federation forced upon unwilling Africans, and he becomes sceptical of British high principles. It seems to be special irony that Father Huddleston's book is named in a quotation from Chesterton, the man who made himself unpopular fifty years ago by defending the Afrikaaner.

Father Huddleston uses the word 'Catholic' heavily in this book for his convictions. 'I am not trying to fight the Afrikaaner by any other means than the proclamation of Catholic truth.' He does not pull his punches, which contain a strong attack upon the Catholic Church, among others, for compromising. He is severe, even bitter, about Calvinist 'heresy'. And yet if you know him you know there is nothing venomous in it. I hope that if he reads this he will take what is coming now in the same manner. 'When you call me that, smile!', as the Virginian said.

The defect in the judgment above is that it comes from the background of another national Church, a deficiency in Catholic-

ism. English social ideals become mixed up with the Gospel. It is here that the Catholic Church is so fitted to judge. To be a Catholic, to have the feelings thereof, is to be aware of being a member of a spiritual unity with people whom you can not humanly fathom, unintelligible people, 'Wops and Dagoes and Dutchmen', Franco's Spain or Republican Ireland, as well as democrats in France or America. It is to be largely indifferent, doctrinally, to democracy or autocracy, simply because of the experience and attitude of the Church. It is to have a love for, and a desire to enter into the minds of, people most opposite—for the Englishman here the Afrikaaner. It is to be able to make the guess that the English-Afrikaans argument is probably about fifty-fifty as God sees it. It is to understand the flaming sense of the Afrikaaner that he is free at last to try his Gospel, to realize his curious sense of joy in being, as one Afrikaans spokesman said recently, 'the most hated nation on earth'. Criticism usually only hardens such an attitude, and South Africa is a sovereign state. No one can rule it from outside without war. In such a situation the only medicine may be that of St Francis of Sales: 'To convert it is sufficient to show love'. And to remember there are two to convert, not only the Afrikaaner, but the Englishman: three if you remember the natives too.

The lack of the help Father Huddleston might have had from Catholicism appears particularly in Chapter III, where he approaches the great question: Can Christianity tolerate a Colour-Bar? He finds the answer in a personal application of the Parable of the Good Samaritan. He repeats: 'Who is my neighbour? . . . Who is my neighbour? . . .' He finds another parallel in a quite arbitrary interpretation of the contention between St Peter and St Paul about the gentiles. He reaches the remarkable conclusion that without this contention 'the Christian Church would have remained a Jewish sect'. He finds that there must never be any racial discrimination, that he must appeal to the conscience of Christendom (p. 79). When he does quote a world authority he quotes (p. 69) the World Council of Churches, in which the Catholic Church is not represented, declaring that: 'Any form of racial discrimination is against the will of God'. Not one of these Churches can apply such a principle to actual living in South Africa. But Father Huddleston finds that the conclusion of all this, unity in Christ, means that all racial discrimination must always be wrong. One can follow the mental and moral crisis,

fought out with the only weapons he had, tearing the soul, ending in his conviction. It was lived up to by the man who drew it. Had he only applied it to his own living there would be no need to protest, but his demand that it should be applied to the whole country, and that to fail to make this demand is to compromise, is an accusation against the Church.

The crisis for a Catholic priest with a social conscience, or to put it perhaps less pompously, with a bit of the radical in him, is quite different. Peter is Peter, the Rock. The Church is the living representative of Christ, a puzzle and an enigma, but the instrument to which he promised the Holy Ghost. You sit down and meditate, best perhaps away from the quivering emotions caused by the immediate presence of injustices. Can the Gospel accept a colour bar? Then you think: What does the Church do? Are not our Bishops compromising? Will not the African, when he comes into his own, scornfully throw off the doctrine that compromised? Then you think: Who am I, and what is the Church? Hierarchies have erred. But is it likely, on a matter of essential principle, on the colour question which divides the earth and means countless millions gained or lost—is it likely that they will be permitted to be wrong now—now that they are only half-an-hour by telephone from Peter? You ‘remember the Church and the centuries’. The Church did not go bald-headed at slavery, nor at the semi-slavery in feudalism, nor the caste distinctions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Why not? Can I answer that question? Not necessarily, for the Church is a Mystery, greater than I. The Church sees into Eternity, and as Father Bede Jarrett said, ‘must have the courage to follow truth even on to the winning side’. Plenty of minor errors and failures and sins, but the Church cannot be substantially wrong. Therefore there is another answer, neither Father Huddleston’s, nor the ‘hypocrisy and rationalizations with which *apartheid* is justified from so many many pulpits’ which he places as an alternative. It is to be with the Church. I am not going to rehearse any arguments. The attitude the Catholic Church has adopted in practice here, in a country of Protestant Churches and agnostics and heathen, is that complete (progressive) integration or separation of the races are alternative solutions. The first is obviously the more ideal, the second the more possible, considering the attitude of English and Dutch Europeans alike. Meantime the struggle with particular injustices, on the mat

before officials, Pass Laws, evictions, all that Father Huddleston describes, goes on throughout a priest's life—that and urging the principles without being led into partisan politics.

It is a weakness in the book that Father Huddleston does not define clearly what he means by *apartheid*. It has half-a-dozen meanings: to some separation of races now, to some temporarily, to some permanently. Some add the idea of temporary or permanent white 'domination'. The '*apartheid*' that the Church can allow to be a legitimate solution is the complete one, which would form separate countries, each autonomous or federated. Meantime someone has got to be in charge, or there would be perpetual civil war. The Europeans could fulfil this office while respecting essential human rights, particularly that to development towards political maturity. Catholic countries and colonies do not have colour bars. But Protestant and other countries may need them, having no universal principle of unity.

* * *

At the end of the book Fr Huddleston comes to his criticism of the Churches. 'It is but rarely in history that the Hierarchy takes a prophetic view and a prophetic initiative against evil.' He instances Thomas à Becket, Faulhaber and William Temple. 'The Church is conniving at evil lest it lose its white members. . . . The Church is in the deadly grip of fear . . .' (p. 157). There appears again that sense of urgency, that such compromise will lose us the whole of Africa. There is something very serious involved here. What is the prophetic office under the New Testament? Is it a gift of foresight to help the Church avoid earthly calamity? It may be in terms of a deeper faith, that sees beyond the earthly calamity. 'The Goth cannot take that which is guarded by Christ', as St Augustine said in his besieged city. Certainly by human calculation Father Huddleston's expectation would seem to be right. But this may only mean that it is not sufficiently of Faith, the sort that may come true but still not necessarily be a prophecy. To the Catholic Church the prophetic office is essentially attached to the priesthood of Christ, and, in so far as it is shared in the Church, principally in the Hierarchy, although it may exist as a special gift outside. As such, in the Hierarchy, it is working all the time in things unnoticed, in the contradiction of human means and human judgment by which the Church so often prospers. To take a parallel: Pius IX might have placed himself at the head of the

new age, the Liberals of Rome, instead of going into exile and announcing from there, amid the scoffing of the world, that he was considering defining the Immaculate Conception. If anyone likes to say he might have done more for the salvation of souls, more to prevent the coming of Communism, by the former course than by the latter, it is a human judgment. But it is not such a judgment as a Catholic would like to make.

We are back again at the Living Church, the question of the office of the priesthood. In Chapter III Father Huddlestone deals more with the general question of the Gospel and the colour bar. Here he is dealing more with the responsibility of the priesthood. He says roundly that neither Wesleyans nor Anglicans nor Roman Catholics are doing their duty. 'To try to save some outward form of Christianity by compromising on its inward reality is to die. To accept racial discrimination within the body of Christ, within the unity of the Church, is not only a contradiction of the nature of the Church, but a blasphemy against the Holy Spirit of God himself. We Christians in South Africa are tempted to do just that'. There is a second element of prophecy, not seeing the future, but seeing a moral and spiritual principle not apprehended by others. It would be an injustice to Father Huddlestone to give the impression that he chiefly stresses the element of immediate calamity likely to come upon Christianity if it does not 'repent before the time'. He is concerned with truth and love, now. But even here, for the reason of the Church given above, we must see his attitude as one of those temptations 'so near heaven that heavenward thoughts alight on them'. I do not know any Catholic missionary who is, as he says, 'in deadly fear', whether physical or the fear of losing white Church members if principle demanded it. But there is also this: 'Be subject not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake'. The Catholic Church is carried forward in these matters not so much by 'working it out' as by the living tradition which has seen a thousand governments, and as many revolutions. The form of uncompromise known to it is not to compromise a pastoral care for the sake of a possible social good. It has a list of priorities. First is to remain, with the means of salvation, among the people, not only the poor but also those who 'as in the higher position are in the greater danger'. Then the direct works of mercy. Then what can be done about social institutions. And in these the Church knows by long experience that

to try to force a social principle on people not morally prepared for it is to court violence, and the hatred that is the evil in violence. The whole of the passage quoted above, so challenging in its sound, could be considered in detail—not least the words ‘unity of the Church’. But it is better in a short space just to stand with the Saints, St Peter and St Paul, St Gregory and St Vincent de Paul, St Francis Xavier or St Peter Claver, all of whom had this kind of problem and approached it in the same manner. These represent the normal priestly duty, and it should not be attacked. They are prophets in and with the guidance of the Church. Special prophetic offices exist, but they too must be tried by the Church.

Will this book do good? One good it will do at least is to people conscious of the problem. Pressure from a liberal world outside is not likely to affect the Afrikaaner. It may only have the opposite effect, as regards his principles. But it may help with one important thing, to force forward the choice, that must be made, between the two political policies that can work: between complete separation or complete integration. For if that choice is not made within twenty-five years by peaceful methods, it will come by force within fifty. Africa is growing fast to political maturity.

Also (although I could not give the book to my people for fear it might make them wrong and biased), if you have read it with the ability to distinguish, you have accompanied a man who obviously has reached that true stage of the missionary when he desires the ending of bars and divisions not just by ‘conviction’ but by love. He has found the loveableness, the pleasantness as friends of those on the other side of the division. He is troubled not only by what separators are doing, but by what they are missing. So perhaps more important than anything yet said is this: if anyone desires to live in this way, drawing near to those separated for the love of Christ, for himself, without attempting to force the consciences of others that have not the calling, it is one of the most important vocations on earth. Almost the only person who can do it in British or Dutch Africa is the celibate, who does not commit and threaten his race by his actions. And it must be trained for, and paid for by being a lover of both sides, and when necessary an anathema to both.