

preserved, read and being read brings joy, satisfaction and inspiration (p. 212). How boringly egocentric can one get? That kind of hope may be fine for the comfortable, well-fed, middle-class European, but unfortunately

most of the people of the world aren't like that and their only hope is for a new heaven and a new earth:—something completely different!

ALBAN WESTON, O.P.

**LE MYSTÈRE DU CULTE DANS L'HINDOUISME ET LE CHRISTIANISME**, by R. Panikkar, trans. by B. Charrière. *Éditions du Cerf*, 1970. 208 pp. 45 F.

The original German edition of this book first appeared in 1964, and much has happened since then; nevertheless, this is still a highly topical and challenging book. Panikkar's contention is that it is only a rediscovery of authentic cult (liturgy) that can begin to solve the religious, or even the secular, problems of our age; and that the meeting between Christianity and Hinduism has an important contribution to make to this rediscovery.

The meeting between religions is bound to happen, the author maintains; the question is simply whether they will be able and willing actually to hear each other. If they try to meet simply as intellectual systems, they will be mutually deaf; it is in their living reality that they can become intelligible to each other—and this is because, in the last analysis, it is only in the *doing* that any religion makes sense even to itself.

And this is, at once, where the problem of the recovery of authentic cult comes in. Panikkar stresses, rightly and somewhat unexpectedly, how India actually stands for the primacy of *doing*; but not just activism or morality. Merely philanthropic, merely moral acts fail to be fully human. There is a liturgical, sacrificial, theandric dimension to the fully genuine human act, something that eludes, without contradicting, rational comprehension. Too much deliberateness, reflexive self-consciousness, actually prevents full involvement in what we are doing.

It is in liturgy, and, finally, only in liturgy that action and contemplation, reason and myth (imagination, instinct, and so on), human autonomy and divine providence find their integration and harmony. But liturgy must be *lived*, and this is one of the outstanding problems in the Church at present. Panikkar warns us that liturgy does not come alive simply through being rationalized and made intelligible to the mind; to be too aware of what one is about is a positive distraction. Yet how does one recover a sense of taking part in a cosmic, a divine, event which involves body, mind, subconscious, spirit, the lot? It seems pretty clear that most liturgical reform,

twentieth-century style, does not help in the slightest. Panikkar—in one of many extremely rewarding 'asides'—stresses the importance of sacred seasons, sacred places, sacred objects, all of which seem to be threatened by much modern liturgical reform (why, in God's name, is the Church's calendar after all these centuries being brought to heel in such an insensitive way?).

Panikkar certainly does not offer us any very practical helps, but his discussion of the development of Indian cult down the ages casts some extremely interesting light on the matter. Phase one he calls heteronomy, basically the condition of 'tribal' man, who is content simply to be a part of whatever is going on, and finds no difficulty at all in grasping that doing these particular ritual acts ensures that the world goes on, and even, in some sense, that God goes on. Phase two is the stage of 'autonomy', when man becomes conscious of himself, and accordingly suspicious of 'external rituals' (India seems to have had her 'twentieth century' a few millennia ago.); it is the inner authenticity that matters, external sacrifice is replaced by the sacrifice of the mind, in meditation, or the total self-oblation of bhakti (devotion). The third phase, to which Panikkar invites us, both Christians and Hindus, is what he calls 'ontonomy', that is to say, a condition in which we are wholly open to the Real, both the absolute reality of God, and the reality of ourselves, bodily and spiritual beings that we are. This involves, for us, a rediscovery of the mythical, without simply relapsing into tribal heteronomy (which is, incidentally, a real danger in the modern western world), a readiness to trust what we cannot grasp, a readiness to trust action, to do things without them being clearly planned and interpreted in advance. We must relearn what our forefathers knew, that cult is not something we simply make up for ourselves, not something we originate: it is a cosmic process, the divine sacrifice which initiates and sustains creation, and in which we are invited, by our self-sacrifice, to co-operate.

And this means a rediscovery of Tradition,

or, in other terms, that Christianity is a Way, not a sect (Panikkar quotes Acts 24, 14). Tradition, in the full sense, mediates a sense of reality, objectivity; but it must be received, not into the mind simply, but into our lives. Once again, we are reminded of the primacy of *doing*. It is in doing that we understand—perhaps one might add, it is in saying certain things too that we come to understand what they mean. And it is only within this doing, this orthopraxy, that orthodoxy can and should develop. Where the doing is in order, the orthodoxy will, in its own time, look after itself. (I'm sure this is an important missionary principle, not only in India, but also in our own paganized west.)

And we must be clear what the content of Tradition is: the living reality of Christ the Lord. In so far as we have allowed our religion to sink into being just dogma and morality, we have created a kind of 'Christianity without Christ'. Panikkar comments wryly that we should not be surprised now to find people seeking 'Christ without Christianity'. It is the living reality that is mediated by Tradition,

and that we must rediscover; that reality which is both divine and human, particular and universal, operative in the distinct events of the life of Jesus, but also in the whole of human history from the creation on. There is the covenant of creation as well as that of Israel, and Christ desires to be born within Hinduism, in a sense, because he has always been there, veiled, hidden, but nevertheless effective and real. Our Traditionalism must take in the whole tradition from the time of Adam, and must therefore learn to be free, to be This without having to be Not That, to be universal, beyond time and therefore truly able to create and dwell within time.

There is an enormous range of topics raised and illumined in this book. It makes a major contribution to the East-West dialogue (amongst other things, it gives a much needed warning that Hinduism should not be confined to modern philosophical Vedantism, which is the religion of only a few, and those generally westernized intellectuals); but it also has a great deal to say to all Christians.

SIMON TUGWELL, O.P.

**THE NUN RUNNERS**, by Sonia Dougal. *Hodder and Stoughton*, London, 1971. 192 pp. £1.90.

The title of this book led me to expect the worst, and I got what I expected. The sub-title, 'the personal story behind the front-page exposure of the nun-running scandal', immediately suggests the 'washing in public of dirty linen' type of confession story associated with the more sensational type of Sunday newspaper. It came as a surprise that the substance of Miss Dougal's book first appeared in the *Sunday Times*. Confession stories make difficult and painful reading especially when they are only about the sins of other people.

The mass media familiarized the world with certain unsavoury aspects of the sending of Indian girls to Europe to try their vocations. This book tries to continue the reporting of those exceptional and embarrassing aspects concerning Indian nuns in Europe. There may be some truth in what Miss Dougal says but it is very far from the whole truth. She tells us how she became involved in the teaching of Indian girls in an Italian convent and how she accompanied Marykutty, one of these girls, back to her homeland in Kerala. She spent about a week in Kerala and writes as though she had spent years there. There are passages of appalling self-righteousness and hysterical comment.

I think Miss Dougal displays an obvious

sincerity throughout the book, but is sincerity always enough? One can be sincerely mistaken, naïve and offensive. For example, she writes: 'Seeing the conditions in which they lived, I was not surprised any longer that most of the Indian girls who arrive in Europe are infested with fleas and lice. Their shining hair is full of them. Here in Kerala, sleeping on the floor, bathing in the river, it is only natural that these insects can survive and trouble them. The Indian girls find nothing surprising about it and rather enjoy themselves when they wash their hair, counting whose hair contains the greatest number' (p. 102). I cannot blame Indian nuns being hurt and furious with this kind of writing.

Miss Dougal continually hits out at Indian priests and religious: 'What upset me most of all, far more than I ever wanted to admit to myself, was that the people who had given me proof of insincerity and indifference were priests and religious. For me the priest had always been God's representative on earth and as such I respected and trusted him. I knew that there could be exceptions, that wherever there are human beings, one will find imperfection and human frailty, but up to that time I had never come into direct contact with attitudes like these. What shocked me most