

munion of children. It is well known that the French custom of *Communion Solennelle* at the age of about twelve made the operation of the decree of Pius X difficult to bring into effect. Various methods were tried—some of them described with mordant humour in Fr Gaucheron's book—but few seem to be satisfied with what has been achieved. To find out the exact state of affairs and to see what remedies could be applied, the *Centre de Pastorale Liturgique* sent out a questionnaire, the results of which are summarised in Père Chéry's book. It cannot have brought much comfort to the French clergy. There is still a certain amount of confusion and it cannot be said that Pius X's decree is fully operated. There are many problems and difficulties (which, largely thanks to our school system, we have not to face in this country), but the upshot of these two books is that the *Communion Solennelle* should become a profession of faith leading the child to look to the immediate future when he will have to take up adult responsibilities in the world. If the desiderata of the writers of these books and of those who answered their questions are fulfilled, then French youth will go out into the world well equipped to meet their responsibilities.

Perhaps these books have not a great deal to teach us in England though we must admire the zeal of the French clergy in seeking solutions to their problems, and we might consider the possibilities of a special ceremony of Profession of Faith when our children leave school.

J.D.C.

HUMANITY AND DEITY. By Wilbur Marshall Urban. (George Allen and Unwin; 25s.)

Professor Urban's book of 474 dense pages is 'an attempt at a restatement of the traditional view of the relation of God to man'. It is an answer to modern religious errors such as the exclusion of the supernatural by positivists like Comte, on the one hand, and the exclusion of the rational from religion by Barth and Brunner, on the other. This book is concerned with such subjects as the language of religion and theology, the proofs for the existence of God, the relations of religion to science, mysticism and poetry: its style is abstract and its language that of modern philosophy, which is far from that of current Catholic thought.

While one welcomes a book on religion by a serious thinker who often adopts the conclusions, if not the arguments, of great Catholic thinkers, it must be confessed that the author's criticism of religious errors such as those of Tolstoy, Kierkegaard and William James is often more convincing than his exposition of 'traditional theism'. While St Thomas is quoted more often than any other writer, and

Thomists will be interested in, if not in complete agreement with, the author's insistence on the axiological (his statement of the relation between Being and the Transcendentals is questionable), one is astonished to find attributed to St Thomas a doctrine of the necessity of the creation that was condemned by the Vatican Council.

Fundamentally, I think, the author fails to stress the complete transcendence of the Christian Revelation. For him religion 'is the great thing it is because, however varied the language it speaks, it really ultimately says the same thing'. (p. 19.) The principal Christian mysteries are or have been believed in by pagans 'quite independently of Christian influence', but the essence of religion is only to be found in its 'higher forms', and thus the differences between Christianity and Buddhism, for example, should not be exaggerated, but should be considered as 'variations on one fundamental theme' (p. 273). One wonders if Professor Urban thinks that each of the 'higher forms' of religion is equally true, equally deserving of assent.

Modernist influence is still more in evidence in the author's treatment of the Myth and the Symbolic in theology—'even the most spiritual symbols of the most moralised religions have their source in the womb of the unconscious out of which the myth and its symbols have been born'. (p. 89.)

The author emphasises that the supernatural is beyond the reach of science or poetry, but he himself appears to judge the supernatural by the light of natural reason. Thus the 'real meaning', for him, of the Incarnation is reduced to the philosophical truth of the identity of goodness and being (p. 269), while the doctrine of the creation is important especially because 'it makes one feel an extraordinary lightening of the burden, whether of obligation or fatalism' (p. 273). Similarly the mystics' teaching is accepted, because what they say corresponds to the 'religious sense' in man.

Such judgments seem to indicate, to say the least of it, an extremely faulty method, for early in the book the author admits that the possibility of Revelation is a 'basal one for any philosophical theology', yet this question is only discussed in an appendix *after* assessing the pronouncements of religion and its relation with human activities, and then in such a way as to betray subjective and merely human criteria. And nowhere does the author decide whether a supernatural revelation has in fact taken place. Instead, one is told that religious experience embodies the transcendent and 'the word of man *becomes* the Word of God'.

Thus one doubts very much whether the author shares the Catholic view of the supernatural, but even in his chosen field of natural theology the presentation is extremely incomplete. The existence of God, the

doctrine of analogy, the identification of Supreme Being and subsistent goodness are all emphasised, but Creation and Conservation, Providence and Foreknowledge are hardly mentioned. Yet all these are an integral part of that traditional theism which the book purports to represent.

Books of this kind make one realise the inadequacy of studying Christian thought in isolation from the Revelation whence it arose. The separation of humanity from deity is not a new problem but a very old one that received its answer when God became man and reconciled all things to himself on Calvary. A religion that lacks dogmatic content can never bridge the gap, but only one that is centred on the Person of our Lord, the one Mediator between God and Man.

DOM HUGH FARMER

WHAT ST PAUL SAID: *or* The Teaching of St Paul. By J. W. C. Wand, Bishop of London. (Oxford University Press: Geoffrey Cumberlege; 7s. 6d.)

Anyone who has tried to expound St Paul in the classroom, in the lecture-room, or in church, and has used the technique of partly summarising the argument, partly reading or paraphrasing the actual words of St Paul, and partly explaining in asides the circumstances and background, while welding these elements into a continuous exposition, will appreciate this book very much. Such a technique requires that the speaker have at his finger-tips on the one hand the background, be it scriptural from Acts or other Epistles or be it the general history of the times and places, and on the other hand the actual text of St Paul, together with a knowledge of the literary problems involved. Then the hearers will be able to grasp 'what St Paul said' and what his words meant to the original audiences at Thessalonica, Corinth, Ephesus, etc. The object of this technique is to enable hearers to appreciate the message of an Epistle as a whole, and at the same time as a section of St Paul's own developing thought. It is thus different from the task of tracing St Paul's theological doctrine from an unconnected series of scattered remarks and expositions. An important necessity is an adequate translation, preferably a translation into the idiom used by the speaker in his exposition.

Dr Wand is a master of this kind of exposition and magnificently equipped for carrying it out. This short book of 105 pages is an example of the thing in practice, being mainly a transcript of four lectures delivered to teachers in London in 1950. The four lectures are entitled: The Background, Letters of the Second Journey, Letters of the Third Journey, and Letters from Prison. The manner is extempore and spontaneous—there are no footnotes supporting opinions or weighing