

the post-Vatican II period have their roots deep in the nineteenth century. J. Derek Holmes on Newman and Hugh MacDougall on Acton both show that the tradition of 'liberal Catholicism' was real enough but lonely too. It collapsed before the ultramontanist imposed during the long period of Manning's rule. Priests wore buckles on their shoes to demonstrate their *Romanità*. Anti-intellectualism became *de rigueur* and claimed evangelical support: it was a way of expressing the Church's mission to the poorest. The touchstone for catholicity was support for the temporal power of the papacy. By 1921, writes R. J. Lahey, the policy of the English Catholic Church could be summed up under three heads: 'the strengthening and expansion of its own structures, the securing of an increased measure of recognition in English Catholic life, and the attraction of new members to its ranks, primarily from the Church of England'.

Yet all along there were stirrings of new life. Nicholas Lash attempts to show that the 'Modernist crisis' was not an unmitigated disaster, but that it marked the start of a 'rich and fruitful renaissance of Catholic life, thought and spirituality, which came near to fruition in the 1960s'. Lahey shows that Cardinal Bourne, contrary to popular belief, was not wholly opposed to the Malines conversations, and even proposed that they be continued on English soil. Adrian (*In Filial Disobedience*) Hastings takes one on a terrifying

journey through the 1930s when to be a Catholic writer was to be a Catholic apologist, but when, nevertheless, an articulate laity began to emerge.

But how fragile and blighted it was. 'No sane and instructed man', thundered *The Tablet* as late as February 1939, 'would hesitate to prefer Fascism to Communism' (not a point brought up in the obituaries of Douglas Woodruff), and Catholics were exhorted 'not to join or encourage this anti-Fascist crusade'. Bernard Sharratt reminds us of what happened—at least as reflected in the pages of *Herder Correspondence*—in the 1960s, and thus one reaches the safe haven of the present when all is anti-ultramontane sweetness and liberal light. At least among the denizens of St Edmund's House.

Throughout the book there hovers the shade of Newman. One quotation from him unifies the whole enterprise. Contrasting his own situation with that of medieval theologians who would be challenged by their peers, Newman wrote:

'Now if I a private priest, put anything into print, Propaganda answers me at once. How can I fight with such a chain on my arm? It is like the Persians driven to fight under the lash'.

Mgr Sweeney at St Edmund's House substituted the long leash for the lash, and this volume is evidence of the success of his method.

PETER HEBBLETHWAITE

THE VEDIC EXPERIENCE, by Raimundo Panikkar. *DLT*. 1977. pp. xxxviii + 937 £20

This massive anthology of the Vedas is intended, as the subtitle warns us, "for modern man and contemporary celebration". That is to say, it is not presented as an academic introduction to a body of classical Sanskrit literature, but as a monument of the human spirit, interpreted as an authentic and abiding expression of something that modern man can make his own and use as an aid and inspiration in his own contemporary exploration of and celebration of the mystery of life. Indologists must judge how far Panikkar's presentation is fair to the sources and how accurate his translation of the texts are, but a merely academic response to this

book would be unfair to its declared purpose. Speaking simply for myself, with no professional competence in Indology, I found that the pre-Upanishadic Vedic texts were beginning to make sense and to appeal to me in a way I have not found them do in previous anthologies and introductions. Panikkar very deliberately does not follow the main road of neo-Vedantism, and his selection of texts is biased away from the Upanishads and the Gita in favour of the older texts, and this allows him to present a far more complex and convincing picture of Indian religious thought and experience than is to be met with in most books on the subject. He

manages to convey an impression of a kind of Advaita which seeks to harness together a radical transcendentalism with a profound and positive insertion into the realities and delights of this world. Life is to be lived to the full, and renunciation is only legitimate when it comes from such a fullness. Non-dualism is not the same as monism, he warns us; ultimately it is the concepts of Person and Sacrifice which hold the system together, and which allow us to move beyond solipsistic absolutism and total relativism. If the language used in Panikkar's introduction is often evidently modern, and often jargony and

neologistic in a slightly jarring fashion, the texts he quotes seem to me usually to substantiate his exegesis. (The kind of neologisms we have to put up with are words like "metaontic", "theanthropocosmic", "transmythization").

I suspect that Vedantic orthodoxy will find itself ill at ease with this anthology; but others—maybe even "modern man" himself—may well find in it a stimulus to profound reflection, as well as a collection of impressive and beautiful texts.

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