

called 'the great mystery of unity'. This is the Johannine theme. For the Council was the work of John XXIII to 'make straight the way of the Lord' like the precursor and to teach his 'little children' to love one another like the beloved disciple. In this perspective the unity of the Church is seen as the sign and reflection of the unity of God, a unity of love in which Christians share by their love of the Father in Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. It is this love, poured out by each of us on the brethren who share the life and love of God with us, that constitutes our unity. Hence it is that Christian unity is not something for which we must work simply because of the scandal of disunity; it is something we must pray God to show forth in us, for it is the efficacious sign of the redemptive love of God for the world.

In this light Fr Häring discusses many of the details of the Council's work. By it, too, he penetrates through the debates about unity among Christians to the idea of the conversion of *all* Christians to unity. It is a provocative book; it really does provoke thought about the issues involved and leaves one wishing that the author had himself taken the discussion further along the lines he indicates. It is a book to be thoroughly recommended.

SEBASTIAN BROOKS, O.F.M.

THE SECULAR MEANING OF THE GOSPEL, by Professor Van Buren; S.C.M., 25s.

Perhaps one of the most striking features of the attempts of Anglo-Saxon theologians to come to terms with contemporary philosophy is the complete amateurishness they show in their understanding of what a philosophical problem is, and what the philosopher is attempting to do. Coupled with this is an extraordinary willingness to regard what the philosopher says as sacrosanct, even if it is necessary to reduce the gospel to utter triviality in order to square it with the concerns of philosophy. Both of these features are present to the full in this book by Professor Van Buren. He is concerned to analyse the meaning of theological assertions in terms acceptable to 'linguistic analysis'. This term is left almost unexplained beyond reference to a wide variety of authors, such as Wittgenstein, Flew, Ramsey and Braithwaite, who seem to have little or nothing in common. They are all represented as agreeing that the meaning of a word is its use in language, which is interpreted as a 'modified verification principle' that the meaning of an assertion is given by what would count for or against it. (It is not made clear what kind of thing is envisaged by this obscure phrase—for instance, it is clearly not intended that I should be allowed to say that the existence of God counts for the assertion that God exists.) The movement from the meaning of a word to the meaning of an assertion coupled with the introduction of 'an empirical attitude' shows how far we have come from Wittgenstein, who it appears to me was not very interested in the issues implicit in the opposition, empiricism or transcendentalism. But apparently despite the hurried genuflections to Wittgenstein throughout this book, no serious attempt has been made to come to terms with his thought.

Leaving on one side the lack of philosophical sophistication, there is a lesson

to be learned from this book which is not without philosophical significance. Wittgenstein says that 'philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language'. Part of what he has in mind is our tendency to construe a philosophical problem by means of analogies suggested to us by the superficial grammar of our language—to view the soul as a little man within, the causal nexus as a piece of string, the meaning of a word as an object and so on—where of course it is not merely chance that the grammar of our language does suggest these analogies. This tendency is not overcome merely by being pointed out, for even when, say, we realise that language is not an exact calculus and yet that we view it as though it were, we may still continue to treat it as if it were in a number of ways which go unrecognised. Wittgenstein has shown us that a large part of preparation for doing philosophy could well consist in unearthing and tracking down the ways in which we are led on a metaphysical wild goose chase by such false analogies. But what is important is that there are two ways of attacking a myth. One way is in fact at bottom not really an attack on the myth at all, but merely shows how deeply captivated we are by it, even when our intelligence is at its most critical. If I say that we have the idea that the soul is a little man within and wish to attack this idea I may say, 'There is no little man within', and think that in saying this I am committed to behaviourism. That is to say, the hold of the myth is such that in denying it I may feel that I am committed to denying the existence of mind. (I suspect that Ryle is not altogether free from this fault.) The other way of denying the myth is the far more complex task of exposing the real relationships between things, enabling us to use our language and not be misled by the analogies which it inevitably suggests. When Professor Van Buren is concerned with removing the myth that God is an old man in the sky, a myth which corrupts the theological thought of even the most sophisticated of us, he finds himself driven to deny the existence of God and to leave theology in the sadly depleted state of doing nothing more than evincing a fundamental attitude to life. If there is a theological task of enabling us to think of God in a way no longer dominated by this destructive picture, then to regard that task as achieved by denying the existence of God—for that is in effect what Van Buren does—is only to show how far we are captivated by a picture which makes havoc of our thought.

ROGER WHITE

THE MONASTIC ORDER IN ENGLAND, by David Knowles; second edition, C.U.P., 70s.

The typescript of the first edition passed from the author's hands to the secretary of the C.U.P. in October 1937. Much work on early English monasticism has been undertaken and has borne fruit since, in no small measure because of this book: if Dom David Knowles tried radically to revise his virtually pioneering synthesis, he would find himself embarking on a new book. This he has recognised—'Were it to be written again *ab ovo*,' he points out, 'it would doubtless