

rard is clearly unimpressed by more recent developments in the Roman communion. "My understanding of Roman ecclesiology", he says, "derives largely from the works of M. J. Congar, Y. Congar (sic), E. Mersch, and Henry de Lubac", eked out by Walter Ullmann's classical studies of the medieval papacy. It is now forty years since these scholars first exposed the distorted ecclesiology with which the author saddles the Catholic Church today, and fifteen years since the Vatican Council accepted their results. He makes no allowance for the fact that it is the work of devout Catholics that he relies on to build up his picture; he does not seem to realise that they have liberated us by this major act of self-criticism, not of course altogether but nevertheless to a considerable degree.

His main line of argument is not new. Papal supremacy has destroyed the true structure of the Church. It happened because Catholics never had a sense of the Church as a "theandric mystery". That was because of the 'Nestorian' Christology which we have had ever since the Council of Chalcedon in the year 451, and that in turn derives from our defective doctrine of the Trinity, manifest in our belief that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father. There is a good deal in this suggestion. The doctrine of the 'double procession', though developed in the east by St Cyril of Alexandria *against Nestorianism* before it spread to the west, may well in practice subordinate the Spirit to the Word: the charismatic movement might be evidence that the Spirit has been unduly neglected in the west. We might also plead guilty to being at least inclined to keep the divinity of Christ well apart from his humanity: the modern neo-ebionite doctrine of 'Jesus' that has replaced the old-fashioned Catholic emphasis on the

eucharistic Christ *might* be evidence of a certain unhappy dichotomy in our Christology. And for decades now we have been admitting that we put far too much emphasis on the Church as a visible institution.

On the other hand, it is simply wrong to say that if a man who was not a bishop were elected pope he would inherit the Petrine prerogatives before he was consecrated (p. 58). It is nonsense to say that we are committed to thinking that the canon of Scripture was ultimately settled on the authority of the pope (p. 67). If our traditional exegesis of the Petrine texts is unsatisfactory is it any better to say that the evidence we have suggests that St Peter was the chief celebrant at the first eucharist, probably on Pentecost (p. 71)? It is nonsense to say that even at our worst we believe that God is "the mere setter-in-motion of the cosmic process, the uncreated and transcendent cause of limitless created effects related to him extrinsically but not intrinsically" (p. 111). And to suggest that we regard the Church as "some kind of historical institution set up for the benefit of mankind but having no genuine ontological roots in the divine" (p. 96) is quite stupendous in its vagary.

I must simply testify, after twenty five years of adult life as a Catholic, that Mr Sheppard's picture of the Roman Church is an ignorant and offensive caricature. He should pay more heed to his own admission (p. 63) that a sense of the Church as a 'sacramental organism' is being "reaffirmed" in the Roman Catholic Church: whatever the defects of our *theology*, the sacramental realities of the Christian faith have always transcended them. But theological dialogue, if this adversary is typical, will not be easy.

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ST FRANCIS OF ASSISSI by John R. H. Moorman. *SPCK*, London, new edition 1976 pp. 118 95p.

FRANCIS: A BIOGRAPHY OF THE SAINT OF ASSISSI by Michael de la Bedoyere. *Fontana/Collins*, new edition 1976. pp. 279. 75p.

FRANCIS OF ASSISSI: THE WANDERING YEARS by Anthony Mockler. *Phaidon*, London 1976. pp. 254. £4.95.

The abiding popularity and enduring fascination of the character of Francis of Assisi, added to the 750th anniversary of his death in 1276 produced amongst other

works, re-issues of Bishop Moorman's "St Francis of Assisi" and Michael de la Bedoyere's "Francis", as well as a new biography by Anthony Mockler. Bishop Moor-

man writes succinctly and sensitively with a cool grasp of his sources. Whilst describing with admirable brevity the main features of Francis' life he manages to inject a contemporary kerygmatic note. He contrasts somewhat sarcastically our mirky materialism unfavourably with Francis' simple evangelical fundamentalism. Although the irony is somewhat ponderous at times the book is none the worse for that.

Mr de la Bedoyere wisely lays no claim to scholarship, thus we may praise not only his work but also his modesty. Relying, as he says himself, on his own "insight and flair" he has painted an imaginative and satisfying portrait of Francis characterised by a profound sympathy for his subject. Whilst not wholly uncritical Mr de la Bedoyere's is more of a reverent attempt to make Francis live to contemporary man. Perhaps it could be placed in the category of *Legenda*, whose value the author so wisely judges in his introduction. As a work of edification the book succeeds very well.

Mr Mockler begins his book with a preface as a kind of apologia for his method of proceeding. He explains his belief that history is interpretation, and that facts are occasionally treated with over-much reverence. It could be argued that this is partially true, unfortunately this initial impression of partial truth, or rather the lack of it, is one that abides for the rest of the book. It is a far cry from questioning facts and attempting to set them in their context, in itself a laudable intention, to allowing judgments about the context to obscure the facts altogether. Mr Mockler confesses to having cast his net wide in order to study the effect of his environment on Francis and not vice versa. He understands 'environment' in the widest possible sense. This is an ambitious undertaking to say the least, and it is not surprising that Mr Mockler should not have succeeded in it. One of the chief reasons for this failure is, as Mr Mockler again ad-

mits, lack of evidence in general and a lamentable and obvious lack of deep and general knowledge of the period under examination on the author's part.

It is simply not possible to assert, as Mr Mockler so confidently does, that Francis' father was probably a Cathar (p. 43)—where is the evidence? Mr Mockler's own view of Catharism derives from Steven Runciman's excellent but dated work "The Medieval Manichee" neither does he seem to be aware of any literature written on the subject since the publication of this work. Similarly de Rougemont's treatment of the troubadours in "L'amour et l'Occident" whilst admirable in its intuitive judgments is hardly the definitive work on the subject nor the most recent. From a remarkable paucity of evidence added to a familiarity with popular psychological method it is assumed that "Francis both hated his father and longed for his approval" (p. 43). We are then asked to 'imagine' Francis at various stages of his early life, hearing of the fall of Jerusalem etc. and then asked to 'imagine' the effect these events would have had on his own development. Indeed virtually all we can do is 'imagine' since we have next to no evidence for those early years.

Mr Mockler's insights into the military aspects of Francis' character, his constant desire to go on Crusade, his naive gallantry and courtesy combined with a strict and occasionally ruthless attitude to his own brethren, are all valuable and could have been made more of. Unfortunately Mr Mockler's attempts to cast his net wide do not seem to have included the various precursors of the friars. He misunderstands many thirteenth century religious developments, doing much less than justice to St Dominic for example. Perhaps his book was just a little premature, more *cogitatio* of many interesting but undeveloped observations, less 'imagination' and above all less 'interpretation' would have made this book worth writing.

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