

necessity if the growing consciousness of Catholic corporate life and of the opportunities for Catholic leadership were to be brought to full growth and fruitfulness. They were well aware, too, that the idea of People's Colleges might be expected to arouse the interest of the Government before very long and understood the advantage of being in the position of pioneers, with some sort of colleges already established, if and when that time came.

The three papers by Mr Trevett, which make up the rest of his book, outline the purpose, the curriculum and life of the college which 'as yet exists in the imagination and hopes of a few priests and lay-folk'. These few will very soon become many if this book receives the attention it undoubtedly deserves, for many will at once realise the immense desirability of causing the college to exist in actual fact. The now famous Catholic Leadership courses in the Royal Air Force and the recent Birmingham Archdiocesan Leadership Week provide ample proof, if proof indeed be needed, that the kind of Catholic corporative educational life envisaged is practical, attractive, and notably fruitful. There are practical problems to be considered and Mr Trevett deals with these in a practical way. None of them are insurmountable; indeed, in view of the tremendous importance of such colleges, these problems are few and easily surmountable. 'The Catholic religion deals with FACTS', as Mr Trevett rightly points out, and one important fact is that the prevalent heresies of our day are Naturalism and Totalitarianism, and another is that the best practical way of dealing with these heresies is the establishment of a vigorous, informed, integral and corporate Catholic life, and a third is that such a Catholic life depends largely upon just that kind of truly Catholic education which the proposed Catholic People's Colleges are designed to impart. It is inconceivable that any thinking Catholic, reading this booklet, could fail to be moved by the sequence of the above facts.

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CONFUSION OF FACES: *The Struggle between Religion and Secularism in Europe*. A Commentary on German History. By Erich Meissner. (Faber and Faber; 10s. 6d.)

The title is teasing. It reminds one instantly of Max Picard's theory of the deterioration of the human face in Europe within the last few centuries, and how that links up with spiritual breakdown within human society and within the human individual. Or one passes on to the possibility that our world lacks a Common Face in lacking a common mind, unlike the old Israel which was under the direct government of God, before whose Face or Person the community lived and grew. Or again the reference might be to Kierkegaard's theory of the ambiguity of much present-day Christianity,

and indeed the ambiguity of our hearts and the false faces we all delight in wearing. All of these readings will be found relevant at different points to the author's thesis, which is that the Reformation was not merely a reform, but a Schism that made for the unmaking of Europe, dividing it physically as well as spiritually: for the nations of Europe rise and set like constellations—together.

Erich Meissner starts, in a sense inevitably, with Luther: Luther who, although 'he abused his opponents like a drunkard', is in the author's eyes 'as a theologian, in the same category as Augustine'. It is true that at the opening of the 16th century the forces of Reform from within were already lined up, among them Erasmus: but they carried no popular dynamite, and Erasmian reasonableness and scholarship alone were inadequate to the world that was beginning to see reason as an all-devouring dragon. In Luther's eyes the transformation of society was not a Christian's business, and he set out to hedge the secular state around with divinity: how different from More whose *Utopia* was precisely about the transformation of society and who came to defy the secular state. Melanchthon certainly was a humanist, but Luther's influence was decisive, and thus was inaugurated a cleavage between God and Society, carried a stage further after the religious wars of the 17th century, which, despairing of retaining the common bonds (now considered as chains) of Christendom, hoped to find a secular basis on which European unity could be rebuilt. Here I think Meissner might have made it clear that the effects of schism were felt differently in different places, and that the full *shock* that finally dissociated sensibility and that tore culture and civilisation apart was often delayed. Donne, for instance, seems a special case: and, on the other hand, the ravages of the Royal Society's 'new philosophy' in English prose have yet to be inquired into.

Meissner's subsequent story is of the divinisation of the secular state in Germany and eventually in Nazism, and all along he is careful to underline that German guilt is part of a shared European guilt: and further—and which is really a separate question—that the German state of mind is a symptom of a general European state of mind. The war is over but the crisis is still on. He discounts in part the influence of Prussia (Treitschke doesn't appear in the index), and ascribes something to the division between ends and means indicated by the methods of the French Revolution and its parody of Christ as *le bon sansculotte*: he doesn't see that the Revolution took place in a Europe already divided, and had therefore, like much history since, a very equivocal nature. He is nostalgic for the small German principalities, although he mentions in his Introduction convictions 'frequently insufficiently supported by historical evidence' and perhaps in addition academic-seeming at the moment. He praises the breathing spell given to Europe by the Congress of Vienna, which many of its contemporaries did not sufficiently appreciate, scenting the restoration of the *ancien régime* rather than the reconstitution

of an ancient order. Meantime underground resentments were already creating the new politics that would disrupt the facade of a 19th century secular order grounded on nationalist and liberal democracy.

The author is therefore firm that the insecurity and fear bred by bourgeois life in Europe were not the outcome of the World War in 1914, but were inherent in the social and economic order of capitalism, within which framework democracy seemed a half-mockery. Marxism and Nazism both attempted to channel the resultant bitterness and to focus energies that found no creative outlet in industrialism. Nazism itself was, however, fundamentally a conservative revolution, with a cold loathing of the common man, and hence it became a stampede of suburbia whose youth lacked spiritual reserves due to secularism: in fact the soundness and sanity of men everywhere seemed to be impaired as religion disintegrated. Literature, he remarks, grew experimental or obscurantist through lack of mutual aid in the things of the mind and withdrew its sanctions in part from the community. Boredom itself was a symptom of brain-rot, so that war was welcomed as 'an oasis of horror in a desert of ennui'; many were prepared to die for lack of interest. That the symptoms are not confined to Germany may be seen from the spectacle of contemporary France where the absence of any sure mental anchorage has bred nausea, an almost physical going sick before the complexity and nullity of modern living. Meissner recalls St Paul's *tristitia sæculi*, the secular sadness of the destructive element.

One tends to agree with the author that the final answer to this situation must be a theological answer: or perhaps more exactly, a theological answer with psychological prolegomena. At the same time one feels that this might have emerged more obviously if a fuller account had been given of the state of mankind prior to the schism as well as evidence of a fuller appreciation of the diverse elements contributing to it. For instance, the appearance of a lay mind that eventually became laic in tone towards the late Middle Ages. It is not generally appreciated that the break-up of the Ptolemaic cosmos and the dislodging of the sovereign intellect within the human microcosm also quietly dislodged a whole symbolic order: in the Copernican universe one could no longer discern *per sonum cantantium, harmoniam planetarum resonantium*. Montaigne grew sceptical about Natural Law and saw reason as a sort of distorting mirror; Machiavelli broke the organic connection between ends and means: both can be regarded as typically modern men (which is not to deny the links between *Il Principe* and the *De Monarchia*, for example). Parenthetically Meissner accuses the Church of 'Christian archaism', an undefined term which could be interpreted as an irrational conservatism, or as a generally retrospective attitude, a too literal attempt to become 'as little children'. Adequately to answer the accusation would require more space. The desire to escape from history is a temptation the Christian ought to resist, and the fostering of a sane metaphysic of ends and means need not be an archaic endeavour (although some-

times done in archaic language!), nor an illicit transference to an unworthy object of what Freud calls 'oceanic feeling'. Further, the Church's sacramental order is directed to unity in man and society, not in recovering a primordial innocence, but by entering a new order to meet the prospective requirements of a disordered world. The paradise regained in the Gethsemane of Experience is very different from the paradise lost in the Eden of Innocence.

One final caution. The author fails to solve one of the problems he poses, which is generally that of the dissociation of sensibility from the controlling intellect, and of thinking that has forgotten its relevance to life: and the problem of writing or speech (and that not always political or popular) that deadens rather than heightens feeling or that screens thought off from contingent realities. We cannot afford, like the shining lights of the Enlightenment, to lease out 'enthusiasm' to the sects. Feeling should sustain thinking, and reason should not be thought of as negating or tyrannising over emotion: otherwise the division will poison all human society, as it has already to an extent poisoned men's language. We must also be content to know in part: the human One is open to experience, not like the closed One in Plato's *Parmenides*. Obviously these exigencies are not met by an idealistic or materialistic reason or by that scientific outlook that would reduce the universe to algebra and no more: some recent existentialism, knowing only these attitudes, treats the mind as a machine for turning the living flesh of the concrete world into a giant zero. Meissner indeed realises that this is the outcome of spiritual fatigue, and that Europe's war of nerves pre-dated Munich, so that a policy of rest will alone help us on to a new maturity. He does not so clearly see that we cannot rest on the volcano of an established disorder—surely one lesson to draw from the Vienna settlement. The roots of this appear in a statement he makes elsewhere echoing the old 'Salvation is of the Jews, not of Aristotle'. But St Thomas's Aristotle, as Gilson and others have abundantly shown, is a baptised Aristotle: not the impossible post-Christian of later laicisers in the schools, against whom the tide of 16th-century feeling turned. Intelligence and life must mutually support each other, if organisation is again to be harnessed to organic advance, and a new alertness must come if the present confusion of minds is not to be replaced by one standardised mind, instead of by a diversity of minds nourished from common sources and all open to the creative touch of an uncreated fire.

JOHN DURKAN

THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON. With a preface by T. S. Eliot. (Faber; 12s. 6d.)

BEYOND THE URALS. By Elma Dangerfield. With a Preface by Rebecca West. (British League for European Freedom, 66 Elizabeth Street, London S.W.1.)

*The Dark Side of the Moon* is in no sense anti-Soviet propaganda: it is not one of those publications whose purpose is to use human