the syllabus are, doubtless, out of touch with this odd Dark Ages spring, and the L.S.E. type of African administrators to succeed them may be out of sympathy. Catholic schools carry the cables from both sides. The Church, as usual has to be the lightning conductor. *A fulgure et tempestate, libera nos, Domine.*

# Reviews

FÉNELON ET LA BIBLE : les origines du mysticisme fénelonien, by Bernard Dupriez; Bloud et Gay, 12 NF.

Few names in the history of religious thought in France in the second half of the seventeenth century have given rise to such conflicting opinions as that of Fénelon, Archbishop of Cambrai. Any work, therefore, that tends to a better understanding and clearer appreciation of the great Archbishop is to be welcomed. The present study is such a work, and a very interesting and important study it is. From a detailed investigation of Fénelon's use of the Bible, M. Dupriez has been led to the conclusion that the main source of the Archbishop's thought and teaching is to be found in scripture. Moreover, this study is noteworthy for the method of enquiry that is employed in it. To see, therefore, how the author has carried out his undertaking, it will perhaps be most helpful to glance at the main divisions of his work.

The book is divided into three principal parts. The first of these is devoted chiefly to an account of the early life, education and career of the Archbishop, particular attention being paid to the part the Bible played in them. Much that is stated here concerning Fénelon's formative years is necessarilly conjectural. These years were not the golden age of Catholic scriptural exegesis: that epoch had closed. The leading minds in the world of biblical studies in Fénelon's day devoted their attention to historical research and to critical editions of scriptural documents of preceding ages. This trend, however, does not seem to have noticeably affected Fénelon's study of the Bible; and M. Dupriez states that Richard Simon, a leader in it (who was later strenuously opposed by Bossuet), if known in Fénelon's circle, was suspect. Of more interest to many readers will be the attempt made in this section of the work to assess the influence on Fénelon of such notable personalities as M. Tronson who instructed him in the spirit of M. Olier, and of the great Bossuet who was much impressed by Fénelon at the meetings of the *Little Council*. This select body, founded by Bossuet, was chiefly devoted to scriptural studies. The meeting of the young



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Abbé Fénelon with Madame Guyon and its consequences for him is also discussed with discernment.

The second part of this study consists of an examination of Fénelon's writings in the light of the Bible. Not every reader will be in agreement with the conclusions reached in this part of the book. The author labours with great diligence and brings together a wide range of gleanings, but when he comes to formulate his findings it is clear that their acceptance, to no small extent, must depend as much on the good will of the reader as on the conclusive character of the reasoning. Fénelon, of course, made assiduous use of the Bible, but rather for the sake of supporting and illustrating thoughts that had originated elsewhere. This distinguishes him from Bossuet, for example, who is a more simple exponent of the Bible in what he thinks and writes. There is so much human reasoning in Fénelon and so much of the humanist that a reader might well think that M. Dupriez has, more than once, overstated his case. Fundamentally, perhaps, it could be said that in this part of the work an impression of false emphasis is given. Since we cannot write here in detail, we note but one conclusion which the author himself regards as rather novel, that reached concerning the best known of Fénelon's works, *Télémaque*. According to M. Dupriez, 'le Télémaque est une transposition de l'Écriture, il est animé du même esprit'. Remembering not only the music of the prose of *Télémaque*, but also its political and humanitarian extravagances, even the evidence furnished in a detailed appendix by the author to justify his claim will fail to convince many readers.

The third part of the work is entitled *Essai sur le pur amour*. Here the author, in eleven chapters, treats of certain characteristic aspects of Fénelon's spiritual teaching. It is impossible to follow at length, in this notice, what is said of them. We do not think, however, that M. Dupriez has said the final word here; nor is it to be expected in such a work as this. He has, nevertheless, given a clear and careful exposition; his arguments must stand or be refuted by others just as clearly and scientifically presented.

Not the least interesting section of this book is the appendix treating of certain aspects of the Quietist controversy, which was, of course, the turning point in Fénelon's career. The more this unhappy episode is studied, with all its bitter polemic and loss of friendship, the more one is made aware of a certain shallowness regarding important points of spiritual theology, understandable yet real, in the two chief contestants. It has been well said of them that 'Sans la méconnaître totalement, ils (Bossuet et Fénelon) n'appliquèrent pas assez, aux états mystiques, la *doctrine des dons* du Saint Esprit qui les explique le mieux'. M. Dupriez's sympathies are, naturally, with Fénelon, and it is from the standpoint of a sympathizer rather than from any theological position that he writes in this appendix. In reviewing the Quietist quarrel, one's sympathies, as well as one's reproaches, tend to move from one of the main figures in it to the other. Mr C. Dawson has said with much truth that ' the battle against Pure Love was fought out on the back stairs with no holds barred'; but it was not so easy to come to grips with the sincere, yet tortuous and elusive Fénelon. Once however, the



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cause was *sub judice* Bossuet, most people will hold, must bear the chief burden of blame. What M. Dupriez has to say of this affair is well said and merits close attention. An extensive index completes this competent study.

This work, then, in which so much of Fénelon's thought is freshly presented, will reward thoughtful reading, whether its conclusions are accepted or not. It is a book that was needed. Moreover, it should contribute not a little to a better understanding of the life and thought of the Archbishop's time generally, which at so many points came under his penetrating gaze or were affected by his touch.

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FROM LIMBO TO HEAVEN, by Vincent Wilkin, S.J.; Sheed and Ward, 7s.

This short book at once enlists our sympathy because its object is to show that unbaptized children can go to heaven. Fr Wilkin remarks—and he is surely right—'There is no doubt whatever that what is called the liberal view, i.e., the view in which the unbaptized infants are not excluded from heaven will become increasingly popular' (p. 9). However, he is quite honest in stating the formidable array of opinions throughout the history of the Church which have held that they could not be saved—opinions which have differed widely as to these children's fate but have all agreed in excluding them from the beatific vision. Nevertheless he feels that, since God wishes all men to be saved and there is such an immense number of unbaptized children, this cannot be the truth. The argument which he puts forward is summed up by saying, 'The solution we have reached is this, that the unbaptized infants go to heaven because they not only participate in the resurrection of Christ, as indeed do the rest of mankind, but because there is no obstacle in them preventing the super-natural efficacy of the resurrection taking effect' (p. 117). It is probably true to say that on this subject it is impossible to produce a compelling argument on one side or the other, but that, if we are convinced that God cannot wish to exclude unbaptized children from salvation, the line of reasoning put forward here is a sufficiently reliable support for the conviction. One point which is interesting is this. Here we have a view which is rapidly gaining ground and which is certainly contrary to the view commonly held in the past. One view is not developed from the others, the development of doctrine has arisen from the realization that these views were conclusions from a more ultimate belief, and it is the more ultimate belief that has developed, namely, the emphasis on God's will to save, the fuller appreciation that God is love, with all that follows from this.

It has to be said that some parts of the book are not very clearly written. Such a sentence as the following is not easy to disentangle, 'But, owing to the delayed action of the liturgy by which the work of redemption, though achieved by Christ, continues in a process of assisted achievement throughout time, it has



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