of the principal ills of current society? And in the meantime it is those who are in many ways suffering least who would be taking part in the therapy sessions, which as part of the world of the haves are being held at the expense of the continuing suffering of the have-nots. *Je participe, tu participes . . . les souffrances des souffrants continuent.* This whole section raises more questions than it even attempts to answer, and the answers that it does give may provoke as much disagreement as assent; but it does make worthwhile points, like '*Liberté ne veut pas dire abstraction des problèmes les plus urgents du monde ambient*' or '*La liberté de la communauté universitaire se spécifie par l'exercice sans entraves de l'intelligence, de l'imagination, de la créativité au service de la culture*' (107). Such points are highly debatable—how, for instance, do you square '*sans entraves*' and '*au service de la culture*'? —but it is perhaps precisely by leaving readers dissatisfied in ths kind of way, and stimulating some into working out other answers, that this book is most praiseworthy. Chapters 4-6 have already been commended to those whom they chiefly concern, yet they should not be dismissed by others as irrelevant to consideration of the tensions or conflicts between searching for truth or even avoiding falsification in exposition of uncongenial doctrines, on the one hand, and fidelity to a determined cultural position (and that of the society which is maintaining the university or other institution) on the other. While such considerations can be ignored by classical liberals, though less convincingly in these post-Warwick days than formerly, they cannot be ignored by catholic Christians (and hence, one trusts, by Catholic Christians) who are aware of what is going on, save at great risk of bad faith. Catholics, like serious Marxists and (perhaps) unlike classical liberals, cannot sensibly and plausibly maintain that they could never even be tempted to sin against liberal academic ideals, for the good of the cause.

Many judgments in the book cry out to be contradicted or rejected; others should be justified and are not; some of the factual statements must be false and others are false: e.g. on the maintenance of universities, etc., in the U.K. Also, evidence from carefully conducted studies is too often given the same apparent weight as the dicta of some ephemeral catchpenny. One recognizes that good sociological method makes for a certain promiscuity in the collection of data; but the result presented should not look like a jackdaw's nest. Such things, however, are at most mildly infuriating and should not deter those interested in the kinds of problem raised from reading this stimulating book.

There are two indexes, a bibliography, two tables of contents (one fairly detailed, yet not always clearly indicating the actual contents of individual sections) and remarkably few proof-slips, when one remembers that at least part of the book could not have been set up before February of this year. 'Pin Emile' on the cover should be Émile Pin.

The book ends with a quotation from Paul VI: 'Catholic universities are a necessary element in the Church living in the world and at the service of the world'. Either that is plainly false or the Church, for many centuries, was not living in the world and at the service of the world. Which, in view of the Church's professed mission, would seem rather worse than being plainly corrupt. It is Mgr Carrier's own view that those words of the Pope are '*à la fois réalistes et convaincantes*' (244).

L. MOONAN

CONFESSION: OUTMODED SACRAMENT?—An Enquiry into Teenage Opinion, by Sister Laurence Murray, S.N.D. *Geoffrey Chapman*, London, 1970. 189 pp. £2.

For most Catholics confession is the first sacrament they actually experience, generally just before first communion. This is widely considered too young an age for confession, but things will probably stay this way for a time since the General Catechetical Directory issued from Rome last year insists that confession should precede first communion.

This first experience colours our whole approach to confession and our understanding of it: we get stuck in the attitudes of children. Indeed, this is sometimes even encouraged—witness the stories of saints whose confessions are precisely commended as those of a child. If these attitudes are rejected there is not much underneath to replace them.

Often enough confusion arises while people are still at school. So the views of teenagers as collected in this book—and Sr Lawrence Murray's reflections on them—can be applied fairly generally to the situation of Catholics at large.

The first part of the book is a survey of the replies given to a questionnaire by over 1,600 16-year-old girls in England, Scotland, the U.S.A. and Lesotho. The questionnaire seems to have been put a few years ago (no date is given for the original survey) but the replies

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have been supplemented with later material—and, anyway, the only change in the situation recently has been the increasing independence of teenagers and their reluctance to assume any longer that there is something going on in the Church even though they may not understand it. Statistics of the replies are provided and occasionally passing references made to the cultural differences involved (e.g. the Scots girls had a tendency to think that sin made Christ go through Calvary again), though perhaps the most significant thing culturally is that the same questionnaire, quote from Michel Quoist and all, could be given to Catholics of such widely different cultures. But, by and large, Sr Lawrence concentrates on verbatim extracts from the replies.

What these reveal is total muddle about what sin might be, which is not helped by early use of lists of sins or training that it's about disobedience to rules and lying. Equally there is confusion about what forgiveness might mean —and there is no sense that the sacrament is about a forgiveness already given in Christ. The immense goodwill of the teenagers is evident but, in this muddle, there is no agreement as to what confession is about. It is not surprising that they are gradually giving up confession but are left with a kind of residual worry about it.

Their differing expectations of confession are also apparent. There is a clear demand for some kind of general public confession, for a kind of private confession in which a personal relationship is established, and for a kind of private confession which is strictly anonymous and formal. The present discipline of confession cannot satisfy these demands. Moreover, there is at present normally no way for the priest involved to know what demand is being made: most of the girls wanted help, but some of these were waiting for this to be offered, others of course regarded any explicit offer of help as totally objectionable prying. If the priest misjudges whether he should speak or be silent, this may well affect whether or not they go to confession again. The rôle of the priest is therefore part of the problem. It is salutary enough, too, to see here the opportunities in the present set-up for the priest to be dominative, recognized as such, and distrusted.

The second part of the book is an attempt to deal with some of these problems. Having observed, for instance, that children first of all see sin as the breaking of rules and then later —sometimes—as a failure in moral development, Sr Lawrence indicates a further step: to see it in terms of the rejection of the covenant relationship with God, and thus in the context of a developing life of grace and one's basic orientation to God. This is all put in fairly personal terms and the aspect of the matter which can be described as the battle with evil is lacking. It is not easy to re-establish the natural understanding of mythology that young children have, but an understanding of evil which includes something of the struggle with the powers of darkness is surely necessary at some time to make sense of our experience. Similarly the overcoming of these powers gives some sense of what Paul means by the freedom of Christians—and what Paul might have meant by freedom is one of the things the girls were completely baffled about. One feels too that in this section Sr Lawrence has rather too readily assumed that what is wrong is that the answers of the Church have not been properly expounded, rather than asking why the girls responded the way they did. That the girls did not see confession as an encounter with Christ, for example, is surely not something to be horrified about, but the perfectly correct insight that confession is by no means something that can be described in any ordinary sense as such an encounter.

Sr Lawrence rightly insists that teaching about confession must be based on some sort of communal experience of the sacrament. Like everyone else, young people are profoundly bored by Vatican II and the pilgrim people of God when they have no experience on which to focus such talk. Accordingly some suggestions for communal services of penance are included. Though with these under the present discipline not being expressly sacramental (although generally including a place for private accusation and absolution), one feels the force of one girl's criticism that they are a compromise making one think that the Church is not sure. Part of the difficulty in all this, of course, is the teachers' dilemma about providing in schools a kind of participation which is not always going to be found in parishes, and it would have been interesting to have Sr Lawrence's views on this problem.

The third part of the book is a brief survey of the historical development of the sacrament. This is useful for showing the ways confession has changed over the years. But as well as drawing out the recentness of confession as a devotional practice, perhaps more emphasis could have been given to the rule that no-one is required to go to confession who has not committed serious sin, for this is quite a good

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starting point in the present confusion. (It is also presumably the ground on which parents rely who decide not to follow the recommendation of the General Catechetical Directory.)

This is a book for teachers, and it will be extremely useful to them. It includes four 'resource units' containing source material, further discussion, and suggestions for teachers.

ANTONY ARCHER, O.P.

GRACE AND FREEDOM: OPERATIVE GRACE IN THE THOUGHT OF ST THOMAS AQUINAS, by Bernard J. F. Lonergan, edited by J. Patout Burns. *Darton, Longman & Todd*, London and *Herder and Herder*, New York, 1971. xii + 186 pp. £4.00.

A study of the development of Aquinas' thought on the recondite topic of the distinction between *gratia operans* and *gratia cooperans*, originally published in a periodical thirty years ago, written in an uncompromisingly technical language (in which terms such as 'prevent' and 'inform' are Anglicized Latin rather than the Queen's English), costing £4.00 for less than 150 pages of text. Clearly, Lonergan's *Grace and Freedom* is not going to sell in large numbers on railway bookstalls. Yet there are several reasons why the publication of this beautifully edited version of the articles on *gratia operans* is an important event.

The topic is of abiding, and crucial importance. Any religious tradition that attempts to come to grips with the autonomy of human freedom, and the sovereignty of divine activity —with the impotence of man, and his liberation by God—is likely to return, from time to time, to thinkers of the stature of Augustine and Aquinas who, within the limitations imposed on them by their cultural contexts, sought for some understanding of the mystery of God's gift of man's freedom. Whether or not Lonergan's exegesis of Aquinas' development is historically satisfactory must be decided by experts in medieval studies. But, for one who is not such an expert, not the least important thing about Lonergan's study is his refusal to abstract Aquinas' thought from its historical setting. Precisely because he lets us see Aquinas' mind on the move *in* that setting, he helps us to tackle the same problems very differently in our very different context. The notion of the 'supernatural' may be unfashionable, but the problems which that notion was elaborated to illuminate are still with us.

Today, Lonergan's work centres on problems of theological method and, in particular, on the notion of 'conversion'. Reading *Grace and Freedom* again, I saw more clearly than when I first read it some time ago, how central these same concerns already were, for Lonergan, in the nineteen-forties. So far as the question of method is concerned, this early study may still serve as a stimulus and a corrective. There is a tendency, in some circles, to press for a unified pattern of religious discourse. Theological writing that is not 'affective', 'non-technical', 'personal', tends to be dismissed as arid, abstract and irrelevant. The language of the economist, the astronomer, or the physicist may have less immediate appeal than the language of the poet, the novelist or (hopefully) the preacher, but to dismiss the former as 'abstract' would be foolish, and to confuse the two would be unhelpful. The distinction which I am indicating is that for which, in *Insight*, Lonergan used the terms 'description' and 'explanation'. Further back, it was expressed by Newman in his distinctions between 'real' and 'notional assent', and between 'religion' and 'theology' (and the *Grammar of Assent* exercised a considerable formative influence on Lonergan).

David Tracy has said of *Grace and Freedom* that 'Lonergan's chief personal discovery was his realization of the possibility of a strictly theoretical approach to theology'. But his recognition of the importance of this discovery went hand-in-hand with a vigorous rejection of the endemic tendency, in Christian thought, to confuse the use of two languages with the perception of two orders of reality: 'To apprehend *going faster* one has only to drop from a sufficient height. To apprehend *acceleration* one has to master the somewhat difficult notions underlying the differential calculus. Both *going faster* and *acceleration* apprehend the same fact' (p. 13); '. . . the idea of the supernatural is a theorem, . . . it no more adds to the data of the problem than the Lorentz transformation puts a new constellation in the heavens' (p. 16). This thirty-year-old study of the movement of a thirteenth-century mind may yet serve as a Tract for The Times.

NICHOLAS LASH

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