

book lies in giving a true picture of Péguy to the English reader. Mrs Villiers has really caught the atmosphere of his extraordinarily effective un-poetic diction. This also applies in a different way to her authentic renderings of a great number of prose extracts from the *Cahiers* in which she makes Péguy tell the story of his own ideas

throughout. Translation is particularly important and difficult in this case, for did not M. Mauriac, on hearing that Péguy was being translated into English, say that he wished someone would first translate him into French?

The book is attractively illustrated and has a useful bibliography.

Elisabeth Stopp

MAN AT PLAY by Hugo Rahner, S.J., translated by Brian Battershaw and Edmund Quinn. *Burns and Oates (Compass Books), 10s 6d.*

The Fathers of the early Church were faced with the task of educating their naturally light-hearted and witty Christians in the seriousness of Christian behaviour. Today 'in a civilisation that is perishing in the barren solemnity of a purely utilitarian view of life' Fr Rahner sees it as a 'healing necessity' to recapture that sense of play, a Greek accomplishment which St Thomas 'baptized in Christ' as the virtue of *eutrapelia* (Cf. *S. Th. 2a 2ae; 168, 2*).

And so he traces through Greek and biblical thought, Fathers and mystics, the idea that the image of human play best expresses the Creator's freedom and that man is most like God when he can look on this life as 'a divine children's game' and man as God's plaything. With the Incarnation, the game of grace, the playing Logos becomes man's playmate and begins that love-play with

the Church his Bride which the Fathers saw pre-figured in Isaac's playing with Rebecca (Genesis 26:8). And since all play is at root sacral and a striving towards *theoria*, the vision of God, Heaven is seen as a game, a dance led by the Logos in rhythm with the Spirit, like the cosmic dance of the stars.

Here is a mysticism of humour, that 'divine drop of oil' so often the sign of highest wisdom. Haecker believes that humour constitutes the real human background of European civilization. Sharing this view, Fr Rahner proposes the man who can play and jest in measure and season as 'the answer to the secret and heart-stirring question as to how we are to give a mature Christian character to our modern existence' (p. 92).

An unexpected and stimulating book in a very readable translation.

S.M.A.

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