be, it is fraught with difficulties. An objection which immediately arises is the following: religious belief is no doubt best understood in its own context, but surely its truth—or credibility—must be established independently? The major part of his argument is taken up with showing the confusion on which this objection rests.

To ask for an independent, non-religious justification of religion is, he argues, like asking for an independent, non-scientific justification of science. It is another example of seeking justification beyond the stage where it makes sense to do so: like asking 'Why be good rather than evil?', or 'Why bother about the truth?'. The believer who is pressed to give an account of his belief, and to show that it is credible, or not without foundation, will find himself trying to do justice to a whole way of life, and a whole way of looking at life. He will be taken up with the attempt to give a true account of the values to which he subscribes, not only in thought but in fact; and the criteria by which he determines what is true and false, what is right and wrong in this context, will themselves be integral to, and definitive of, his faith.

Phillips is particularly concerned, at this point, to emphasize that he is not seeking to *protect* religion from philosophy. He is simply stressing that the philosopher's brief is to *understand* the religious man and his way of looking at things; and he will succeed in this only if he takes pains to study the form of life—the social context, living tradition, behaviour pattern—which is the total framework in which the religious man thinks. And he wisely reminds the philosopher that it is by their fruits he will know them, not by the accounts (often philosophically confused) that believers give of their faith.

Phillips' treatment of this vexed and much-confused question of the relationship between faith and reason does not lend itself to brief summary. One should go on from here to consider the relationship between language games and forms of life, and to notice how he proposes 'love' as a better key to the grammar of 'belief' than 'knowledge'. Which is only to say that one should go on from here to read the book. Besides Wittgenstein, the reader will find the spirit of Kierkegaard breathing new life into a discussion that is still not fully recovered from the winter of Logical Positivism.

J. J. MCCLUSKEY

VOCATION AND FORMATION and CONSECRATION AND VOWS, by E. F. O'Doherty. ***Gill and Macmillan*, 1971. £1.50 each.**

A reviewer's lot is not—often—a happy one. Books have to be evaluated, as St Augustine pointed out, in respect of the merits or demerits of their contents, not of their authors. Never-the less, it grieves me, knowing what an immense amount of good work Dr O'Doherty does for the health and happiness of religious, to say that I find his two books very bad indeed.

If one can disassociate the psychology from the theology and philosophy in their pages, there are perhaps a few useful pickings to be had. For example, the chapter on feminine psychology argues very strongly that the differences between men and women 'which we have traditionally assumed to be innate are in fact psycho-cultural artefacts . . . stereotypes formed by a particular culture and projected on to girls'. Also the discussion on the 'middle years' could stimulate religious of the 'B' generation to live more productively and imaginatively.

However, not only does a large part of both books consist of theological reflections on religious life, but the author's theological and philosophical viewpoints inevitably colour and direct his psychology. The theology I found on the whole to be obscure, arbitrary and sometimes incredible nonsense.

For example, the question is asked: 'How does religious life differ from the lay apostolate?' The answer given is that just as 'the very breathing of a baptized child is different from that of an unbaptized child, though not in any visible dimension(!) . . . so the sacred acts of a consecrated person show forth the glory of God in ways nothing else can'. Of course, as baptism itself is a fairly big deal, 'there are ways in which the actions of lay people can be said to be sacred, but they are not sacred in the sense of consecrated and set apart'. And if you object, dear lay persons, then you simply evince a lack of faith because, you see, 'there is no way of proving all this by evidence'. As a matter of fact, 'in the visible, tangible dimension the act of the lay person may be measurably better than the act of the consecrated person . . . yet what the Sister is doing is immeasurably more valuable in the order of faith because of its sacred nature'. It is particularly consoling to read that, as a religious, I am not quite but almost transubstantiated.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028428900056961 Published online by Cambridge University Press

I mean the 'not quite' is consoling! ('The concept of religious life is not that (transubstantiation), but very, very similar.')

Perhaps Dr O'Doherty meant to be consoling too by the statement that 'vocation to religious life and vocation to the priesthood are not two distinct vocations but a single continuum'. Religious life is the 'providential solution' to the scarcity of priests and must be seen as 'analogous to the steps in the minor orders of ordination'! Well, it must *not* be seen thus. There is no basis in Scripture, history or doctrine for this assertion. Religious life has its members in both the hierarchy and the laity precisely because it is not in itself an expression of the ministerial function of the Church, either hierarchical or lay, but it is one possible expression of the Church as a communion of life in which we may live out either form of ministry (cf. *L.G.* ch. VI).

Another completely unfounded assertion of Dr O'Doherty's is that 'vocation is not a charisma'. My reading of St Paul and of chapter II of *Lumen Gentium* lead me to understand that 'charism' is a very general concept and may designate any gift, ordinary or extraordinary, of the Spirit. Ministries, ways of life, virtues, special tasks are all charisms, gifts given to perfect the Church as a holy fellowship and a proclaimer of the kingdom.

Space does not allow me to challenge many other theological statements that I consider to be positively harmful. I want to say a few words about Dr O'Doherty's contribution as a psychologist. If in fact the ignorance is so abysmal in convents that it needs to be met with embarrassingly elementary information about our psychological development, defence mechanisms and possible perversions, then one must be grateful for the effort to give religious some insight and clinical coolness in coping with their problems and stresses and emotional bewilderment. But for me his advice on the psychological level in matters pertaining to formation, chastity, obedience, poverty, etc., is vitiated by the inadequate model of 'person' that lies behind his approach.

The model is formalist and essentialist—a person seen in terms of a scholastic human nature, specified by rationality, rather than in terms of that responsiveness in relationships which actualizes and bequeaths significance on this rationality. All our speculations and explanations of *religious* life depend upon our understanding of *human* life. I feel not only suspicion but repugnance towards advice on religious life given by one who can state that 'maturity is only achieved when one has deliberately accepted one's total isolation as a person' . . . that 'membership of one another is not part of our experienced world any more than grace is . . . it does not diminish by one iota our total isolation from each other as persons-in-this-world'. What Martin Buber calls 'existence as We' seems to mean for Dr O'Doherty 'losing essential individuality in the group', subordinating one's own self to the collectivity. But this latter is rather a perversion of what seems to me to be the only way to personal wholeness and the only point of such wholeness—the concrete experience of life in communion. This surely is the nature and mission of the Church—to be and to proclaim communion in love and dialogue, and religious life can only be adequately understood as one expression of the Church.

But in Dr O'Doherty's books it is as a lonely person, a mere individual, that one struggles with growing-up pains or with psychosexual or authority problems. Thus chastity consists in being an 'inviolate person'. But what is the content of the term 'inviolate' and what light does it throw upon the difficulty of relating the many 'Thou shalt nots' to the great 'Thou shalt love'?

What is the meaning of the statement that 'poverty becomes a prerogative of very mature persons who do not need to extend their personality into things. They have got to the stage where they are complete within themselves.'? When I have got to that stage I hope someone will tell me that I am not only mature but over-ripe and rotting.

In regard to obedience, Dr O'Doherty says that it 'lies in response to the legitimate demands of the environment' and that 'the question now is what are the legitimate demands?'. But I would counter that the question now is: what is the environment? For it is not simply the observed things and persons among whom I am situated but it is my situation as *interpreted*. It is because the categories with which we interpret and understand our relationships to things and persons are changing that we experience great difficulty in responding to our environment as a previous generation did. The environment is not simply 'given' but constituted by the meaning which my values and view of life lead me to expect. To be concrete: not only do many religious today interpret differently the role of a superior, but they may well find it unnecessary for a per-

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028428900056961 Published online by Cambridge University Press

sonal community to have a superior at all as part of their 'environment'.

I rather hope, too, that neither of these books becomes part of any convent environment, at least not without a warning sticker: 'Reading may be dangerous to your health'.

SR MADELEINE, O.S.A.

THE DEACON IN THE CHURCH: PAST AND FUTURE, by Edward P. Echlin, S.J. *Alba House*, New York. Pp. xiii + 139. $3.95.

Appearing, as it does, immediately after the ordination of England's first permanent deacons in modern times and just prior to the first wide-scale ordinations of permanent deacons in the United States, this is a very timely book indeed. And Fr Echlin, who served as chairman from 1970 to 1971 of a special committee of the Catholic Theological Society of American on the theology of the permanent diaconate, has special qualifications to write it. There will be many who, not knowing the long and diverse history of the deacon in the Church, will wonder what this 'new' thing is, who will want to get some idea what a deacon is and where he came from in the first place and what he is supposed to do. This book has been written to provide answers to just such inquiries.

Judging correctly that the present role, and even the future tasks, of the diaconate must be seen in the light of its past, the author traces its history in four main stages: the Early Church's recognition of the need for men and women to provide services of liturgy, word and charity and its initial attempts to structure just such ministries; the golden age of the male diaconate from Ignatius of Antioch to Nicea; the gradual decline until the reformation; and the restoration, both the inchoate attempts of Trent and the movements in the fifties, that eventually led to the full restoration by Vatican II.

The methodology is textual and historical rather than theological, with brief interpretations of much of the available evidence. The history receives its fullest treatment in those sections dealing with the roles or possible roles of deacons within the pluralistic confusion of early Church order, with many of the major texts being cited in full. In contrast with this variety, a unified picture of the present-day deacon's task is given in a summary of Paul VI's *Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem*.

But the author becomes especially daring when he surveys the possible future role of the deacon in a very brief epilogue. The importance of the deacon is seen not in what he does but in what he is, and for the author, the deacon is an intermediary—between the hierarchy and mankind, between the clergy and the married, between the world and the Church. In this intermediate role, he is seen to have almost unlimited opportunities of service. Even such items as liberating men from the effects of advertising or the 'tyranny of the automobile', lobbying for public transportation, technological sharing with the third world, and the important problem of reconciling man with his environment are not seen as being outside the deacon's portfolio. There are priests who might be envious to see the deacon's role so widely extended, while their own in the author's view is simply that of prayer, study and the preaching of the word.

Readers of this book may wish at times to disagree with the interpretations or the arguments that are presented, but they will often have to base their alternate conclusions on information and evidence that the author himself has provided for them. At other points further information may be required, yet may have been omitted in the interests of simplification or to confine this slender volume within its chosen limits.

PETER J. FENNESSY, S.J.

BREAKTHROUGH, by Mark Schoof, O.P. *Mercier Press* (*Logos Books*); 275 pp. £1.50.

The *Breakthrough* is of course the way in which Roman Catholic theology has freed itself from the dead and deadening language, categories and style of the manuals of scholastic and neo-scholastic theology. How did it all happen? How did it come about that the Second Vatican Council, particularly in its documents on The Church, Revelation and The Church in the Modern World, laid much of this old-style language to rest, and at least opened the way for genuine creative theology? For many, the answer will be seen in the startling and enspirited initiative of Pope John in calling the Council. But of course the answer is much more complicated, much less dramatic than that, as this book shows. And perhaps for this reason

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028428900056961 Published online by Cambridge University Press