

moment', one's *Umwelt*. Passive original sin is the being-in-situation resulting from the sinful free decisions of men from the beginnings of human history to their filling up the measure of their fathers' sins in the killing of Christ, 'the final ratification of the Fall'. After this event, and only after it, are all men necessarily born into a world, a situation, in which the offer of God's grace in Christ has been removed from the natural order, for the Author of life has been thrust outside the community of men; only after this 'second fall' is the source of the restoration of grace absent from our world and original sin strictly universal. Every man now born into the world is in a state of lack of grace before any personal decision on his part; propagation is thus an indirect cause, a condition, with respect to the situation. Much of what Schoonenberg has to say here is valuable, his analysis of the interrelation of freedom and situation, his exegesis of Rom. 5, his remarks on the dependence of the Church's awareness of sin on her belief in redemption. But his concern to avoid the old non-historical approach and to show an intrinsic 'link between the history of sin and of redemption' seems to have led to a position from which the fittingness of redemption through the cross cannot be shown and according to which the saving power of the death of Christ is extrinsic to that death: 'Only from the point of view of God, to whom nothing is impossible, salvation comes to us through the cross of Christ, in connection of course with the Resurrection . . .'. What place can there be in this account for the cross 'as a satisfaction for sin, a making atonement', what place for the theology of *Hebrews*? At the least this question is too big to be ignored in a book of this sort. The treatment of Christ's

'other functions: restoration, salvation, and the destruction of sin' is far too undeveloped (if development is possible in this scheme) to correspond to that dependence of the theology of sin on the theology of salvation on which the author so rightly insists.

Nor is the treatment of Mary's immaculate conception satisfactory. In any theological elaboration of the theme of original sin that departs as notably as does this attempt from the traditional theology within which that dogma was defined, much more consideration must be given to the light which that grace, and precisely as a singular privilege, casts on the treatise. It is not enough to say that ' . . . in the history in which the Fall took shape, Redemption may bring about through (the coming of) Christ a space free from sin'. The closer approach of Schoonenberg to the theology of the Greek fathers and the Eastern tradition generally was pretty certain to raise just those problems which make it impossible for the Orthodox to make sense of the 1854 definition. There are no real hints as to how these difficulties can be met.

It is because the rest of the book leads so directly to these conclusions on original sin that they must be carefully examined. But the author is at pains to point out how tentative are his suggestions in this final section. These suggestions may be unsatisfactory but there is much that is good and stimulating in the book which is not vitiated by them. This is a work which will deservedly be much read and discussed in the next few months. There are only occasional real infelicities of translation; some names on p. 1 are in a dreadful muddle.

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CHARITY AND LIBERTY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT by Ceslaus Spicq, O.P. *Alba House, St Paul Publications*, New York, \$2.95, pp. 112

Fr Spicq's book demands comment not for its merits, which are few, but for its twofold representative significance. One of the worrying features of the conciliar period, with so much still to be done, is that publishers should feel compelled to fill their lists with the names of eminent theologians writing anything which is passably 'new'; if they are continental so much the better. The concern with quantity of translation and publication is in danger of obscuring any discrimination in what really needs to be published or even what needs to be written. The

concern with volume easily becomes a devious way of avoiding the real challenges of the new situation of the church; so long as great quantities of books are forthcoming on every conceivable aspect of theology and Christian life, there is a satisfying feeling that things are really moving at last; everything is functioning in an efficient and up to date fashion.

This touches the second representative quality of the book. The author's thoroughness in scriptural exegesis is unexceptionable, and phrases like 'the achieved realisation of life', 'a

total commitment of self', 'spontaneous liberty . . . orientated, guided in its concrete realisations', give a distinctly contemporary suggestion of relevance and engagement. But if one takes, as one surely must, the rediscovery of the church as a community, given for the world and the furthering of community in the world, to be at the centre of the Christian renewal, then the book is clearly reactionary, the sense of engagement specious – the phrases noted being merely *intensification* of the old individualism, the energy of expression disguising the real lack of change. Fortunately the author does not drop into the currently fashionable use of 'existential' as an elegant variation on 'personal', but what he is doing is part of the same unconscious tactic: the old individualism writ so large that it tends to look new.

Thus while he draws on a wide range of scriptural texts and makes several useful local points of elucidation and comment, the author's focus is not that of the church in the world, the people of God, but insistently if subtly, the narrowly individual, adding very little to what is already available in this line. The forms of the individualist centering of interest are intensified but nowhere surpassed. The nature of charity is dynamic and overt' and is only truly itself when manifested in action, this is stressed, but only from the point of view of the source, the agent; the objects of charity are often only glanced at as if they were merely the preconditions for the development of what really counts, the development of spiritualised interiority towards the 'eternal and blessed contemplation - communion' of the beatific vision. Of the extension of charity beyond our neighbour, to all our neighbours, from another individual to a community, a society, there is not a single mention. Yet, the most difficult and relevant question of charity today is that of the translation of the giving of one's coat and the going two miles into the terms of our membership of a complex industrial society. We are not, and have not been for at least two centuries, living in a society of small, fairly static, face to face functional units in which the direct application of the New Testament forms of charity could still be conceived as efficacious. We live in

cities numbered in tens of thousands, in societies numbered in tens of millions, in which the greater part of our activities are mediated to others through objects, institutions, complex processes of work, transport and communication which are only remotely and analogously face to face relationships. What is the meaning of Christian charity and liberty in this context, how is it dynamic, overt and manifested in action here? To ignore this, the essential question, and take refuge in a spruced up version of the dualism of interior and exterior, individual and society, spirit and body, contemplation and action, is to condemn Christian charity to irrelevance.

The scaling down of the freedom brought by Christ to the 'gift of spiritual and interior freedom' does not take us a step beyond the centuries of atrophied Christian social consciousness. Of course, the succouring of widows and orphans can be safely stressed, this can fall within the range of individual spontaneity, but beyond that render grudgingly to Caesar what is his and stay untouched by the world. Charity can free us from the slavery of sin, the servile and fearing attitude of the slave (p. 95), but real, human slaves must not treat their masters disrespectfully 'under the pretext that they are brothers'. Admittedly this is a problem in the New Testament but is one that the author embraces rather than faces (cf. his remarks on p. 76). The interior and individual senses of slavery, freedom, and fraternal love may be revolutionised whilst the concrete structures which embody these in society may not; thus we read back into the New Testament that distortion of their teaching which has made the church the bastion of the parties of order, a distortion which can never, in overt and manifest form, surpass the 'philosophie de la Noël', the warm, cosy and essentially secure feeling of Dickensian liberalism. Caesar remains where he is, masters are still masters, and slaves slaves, but there's lots of charity and interior freedom about. That is what the church is for. Once more the sad fact that theological radicalism can, to its ultimate self-negation, go hand in hand with being socially reactionary.

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