

Luther unleashed a monster which soon exceeded his control. When he denied the moral nature of man, he never thought of the godless absolute state; when he repudiated the authority of the Church, he did not foresee the moral collapse that produced the German Faith movement; but both were implicit in his teaching.

I have tried to show one of the reasons—and it was only one among many—why Nazism gained so firm a hold. The remedy lies clearly, in the Catholic faith. But there are two questions, unanswered here, which readers should ponder: the first, how far is Lutherianism itself the outcome of even earlier national characteristics, and the second, how is the remedy to be applied, and the cure effected?

B. D. H. MILLER

ERIC GILL: A REPLY

FATHER RALPH VELARDE, attacking Eric Gill in *BLACK-FRIARS* (June, pp. 283-7), makes his first point by misquoting me, proceeds on p. 284 by a string of material and formal fallacies, and asserts on p. 286 that sex is 'part of the virtue of chastity'. With such a writer one does not argue; in the small space allotted me I shall try to write constructively, but must leave much unsaid or undeveloped. What I say may be reinforced from *Letters*, pp. 9-11, 94-6, 203, 253-4, 334-5, 404, 439-40; and *Necessity of Belief*, 346-7.

One need not have read far in Eric Gill to observe his constant return to fundamentals (from sculpture or education to 'What is man?'); his constant making of distinctions (means and ends, intellect and will, tools and machines, poverty and destitution); his constant use of scholastic terms (*form, matter, recta ratio factibilium, operatio sequitur esse*). Such procedure—surely philosophical—marks him off not only from such non-Catholic predecessors as Ruskin, Morris and Lethaby but from most Catholic 'men of letters' today, e.g., French and English novelists and essayists—men who often think in theological terms but seldom in philosophical.

I speak therefore of his 'philosophy', though I leave the name 'philosopher' for professionals of more systematic training. In Thomism he saw the general lie of the land, knew one stretch well and had made one plot his own. Some distinguished Thomists were his friends; he discussed things with them and invited correction of work in progress. He learned much from them; they learned something from him. Some of them may remember producing a quotation—from St

Thomas, St Augustine, Plato—which was new to him but in which he saw something they had missed.

At home with some metaphysical realities, he was also so with the physical realities of stone, wood and iron, string and paper, cows and pigs, our brother fire and our sister the death of the body. He was far less at home in that intermediate world of scholarship—seldom lighted from either above or below—which many confuse with the world of philosophy. Yet philosophers often are poorly acquainted with history or general literature; historians and men of letters very often are strangers to philosophy. Eric Gill took some kinds of history seriously. Without caring whether St Francis was born in 1181 or 1192, he was interested to find as many centuries between St Benedict and St Francis as between St Francis and ourselves. He read and made notes on such things as the world history of Christopher Dawson, the social history of the Hammonds, the cultural history of Mumford. With a great gift for collecting relevant information, he possessed a considerable store of miscellaneous historical facts; but he preferred to use them philosophically, for illustration rather than proof, and was better aware than some historians of the limitations of 'documentary evidence'. Both philosophers and historians are bound to simplify the complex, but the historian's simplification will be more arbitrary. In any large museum Eric Gill could see much historical evidence invisible to most academic historians. And though these might have read fifty books for his every one, his one might happen to be decisive; and how many books had the historians left unread! (What historian of modern Europe could read in ten languages all the poems and novels, even, of his special period?).

His main theses were not of a kind to stand or fall by particular facts. His chief business was reasoning; he left documentation to others, but usually had a good notion of the kind of documentation available. On rich and poor he had studied the evidence of the Bible and recent encyclicals, he could quote St Basil, St Chrysostom and St Thomas and had read Bossuet's *Eminent Dignity*; he would have been pleased but not surprised by the much more elaborate evidence which I have prepared for publication. On military service he knew the relevant early christian documents. For his judgments on art and work he could have provided far ampler illustration than he did; the material and references I assembled in the *Dublin Review*, October 1944, were of a kind quite familiar to him.

He had many learned friends, was specially interested in Eastern thought and culture, and in making some unpretentious statement might have behind him the six volumes of a Japanese classic, a long correspondence with Dr Coomaraswamy, or facts provided by a pro-

fessor of Egyptology. The 'diversity of human opinion' was within his experience. He spent countless hours discussing with Father D'Arcy, Christopher Dawson, Dr Coulton, Herbert Read, Mulk Raj Anand; took his share in the talk at Oxford and Cambridge high tables; submitted at lectures to questioning from philosophers, undergraduates, schoolgirls, business men, the regular and secular clergy. All things considered, his patience surprises me still.

Towards Maritain he always felt too much gratitude and respect to publicise any differences, but he was aware of Maritain's later development and on some points at least distinguished between St Thomas and his commentator. Is it tactful to speak of Maritain's 'total acceptance' of the machine? 'The Church wants some limit set to the dwarfing of man himself in these days through the emergence and dominance of the machine and the continued expansion of large-scale industry. . . . The craftsman transforms his raw material and carries through the whole of a work; in it there is an ample field for his technical skill, his deftness and delicacy of touch in making things that, from this point of view, are greatly superior to impersonal and standardised mass-produced things. Hence small craftsmen as a class are, one may say, a picked militia defending the dignity and personality of the workman'. When the Papal discourse I quote (21 Oct. 1947) has been compared with the Whitsun broadcast of 1941 and the documents of 15 Nov. 1946 and 31 Aug. 1947, it may appear that the baiting of Eric Gill's memory is a less straightforward pastime than might be hoped.

WALTER SHEWRING

Father Velarde writes: I feel that my article has served at least one good purpose in provoking Mr Shewring's eloquent apologia of Eric Gill. If I were writing again I would doubtless modify some of my remarks, and amplify others; but substantially I would still maintain my criticism. I do however want to make it quite clear that I had no intention of 'attacking' Eric Gill, and to repudiate as unjust the suggestion that I was indulging in the 'pastime' of 'baiting' his memory.—R.V.