

Mary, to realize that both sisters are in principle to be imitated by everyone, and that even the busiest Martha has a capacity, to be used, of simply sitting and listening and loving with Mary.

EDMUND HILL, O.P.

TECHNOLOGY AND RELIGION, by Henri Queffélec; Burns Oates (Faith and Fact); 9s. 6d.

We are the children of the Industrial Revolution: only now are the consequences of man's breakthrough into a technological age becoming apparent on a world scale, as the revolution escalates into a world undreamt of even fifty years ago. Yet, man's 'coming of age' hasn't brought with it a radically better society: it is far too easy to concentrate one's attention on the elimination of poverty, and to take this as the sole criterion of progress, without considering the sort of society that has come to life. Of course, the Church has been criticised often for taking the opposite viewpoint, and seeming to equate poverty with Godliness. Today, I believe that a truly balanced and moral voice is urgently needed. The question of world-wide poverty must be solved as quickly as possible, but so must the problem of making Christianity relevant to society: by showing and helping to build a world where love and unselfishness prevail. Above all, theology must come to terms with a society of the future which will be materially rich. It simply will not do to ask men to restrain their progress: they won't.

Above all in this situation we cannot afford to be sentimental or vague. A non-Christian who happened to read M. Queffélec's book would probably be amused by such a statement as this:

May one not rightly be astonished to find in an otherwise excellent book: 'Interplanetary space henceforth belongs to man. The moon no longer has any secrets for him, now that he has photographed its other side . . . ?'

He would probably be more amused still to read:

Again, ought one not to be shocked by such a statement as this: 'It must be admitted that it is not prayer, but the progress of medicine and of economics which has freed mankind from epidemics and from famine?'

But he would most certainly, and rightly, be outraged to read this:

We all, I suppose, laughed heartily, or at any rate smiled broadly, when we read Huxley's *Brave New World*. We laughed with greater calm because we felt ourselves to be fore-armed by our Christian truths against the possibilities of such a gloomy future . . . If the rate of increase continues naturally . . . in five or six centuries there will be a million millions of living men . . . let us say that . . . the men of that future time must settle their own problems. Let us restrict ourselves to ours. (pp. 12-13.)

In the first pages of his book M. Queffélec manages to pack more platitudes and half-truths than many a writer does into a lifetime's output. In fact, he shows all the symptoms of a technologist himself ('one who knows less and

## REVIEWS

less about more and more'—p. 14) in the sweeping generality and superficiality of many of his statements:

The contemporary 'specialist' . . . generally obtains what knowledge he has of disciplines other than his own through the medium of digests, television, magazines, and so on—a 'third-hand' culture. (p. 15.) Huxley's *Brave New World* made all its readers of my generation laugh a good deal, with a delight that was unmixed. (p. 31.)

The style throughout is tortuous and verbose—the translator may, of course, be at fault—almost resembling that of Carlyle. Moreover, the argument appears to be prejudged: in an introduction of only ten pages we learn that the author will not 'kow-tow to technology', and that:

There is a fourth possibility for the future besides the *parousia*, besides a dreadful war which would annihilate nine-tenths of mankind and reduce the rest to the life of cavemen, and besides a 'population explosion' with corresponding increase in all forms of madness. It is still possible that we may enter on an age of relative calm and reflection: not a golden age, nor simply an age of transition, but a real and normal continuation, a period of clarification and of drawing things together. (p. 16.)

The first chapter of the book is concerned with defining the author's use of the word 'technology'. I wasn't at all happy with the result, nor with his subsequent discussion of 'faith'. This extract may illustrate what I mean:

While Thiers condemned the railway in the name of science and proved mathematically that tunnels would suffocate those who passed through them, a holy Curé d'Arts did not even guess that there were such problems . . . Some agnostics, and even some Christians, come very close to ridiculing the Curé d'Arts as narrow-minded and reactionary. But we cannot agree with them. The holiness of the Curé d'Arts certainly has nothing to do with his contempt for railways, and this country priest was surely in any case one of the greatest of the saints . . . (p. 46.)

Occasionally shafts of insight gleam through the verbiage. M. Queffélec's analysis of the world today (Chap. 6) contains much that is true—although there is precious little fact for a book in a series entitled 'Faith and Fact'. But the overall impression is unconvincing.

Christianity can welcome technology when—and it is not always proved to do so—it frees men from misery for a blessed poverty; but that is the extent of its welcome: it has no call to thank the power that makes poor men rich. (p. 80.)

But why, M. Queffélec, why?

LEO PYLE

A HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY; Volume VII, Fichte to Nietzsche, by Frederick Copleston, S. J.; Burns Oates; 42s.

This volume of his *History of Philosophy* will probably be more widely read than any of the earlier volumes of Father Copleston's *magnum opus*, with the