

book. I was grateful to the Editor of *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT* for the opportunity to review it. When I had finished the thirty-four pages which seemed to be the first chapter, I felt that a good beginning had been made. I wondered why Chapter II should be entitled 'The Prospect for Christianity', and was increasingly puzzled as I went on to find that the remaining forty-six pages are an essay on a subject unrelated to free speech in the Church.

It seems to me that this is something which a publisher should not do.

The chapter which alone refers to free speech in the Church whets our appetite, and we hope that the author may on some future occasion serve up the meal. The points he raises could serve as a good foundation: for instance, the layman's responsibilities and duties cannot be divorced from rights; the question of 'public opinion' in the Church where Pope Pius XII is quoted as saying 'there would be something missing from the Church's life if there were no public opinion within her, a defect for which pastors as well as faithful would be responsible . . .'.

Those however who quote Pius XII in theological reviews should beware, for the late Pope wrote so profusely that he is in fact being quoted very widely in favour of sundry theses difficult to reconcile. For this reason, the author is on safer ground when he bases his argument for a vocal public opinion on the nature of the Church herself, and of the layman's essential function within it.

While this role of the layman is stated, and some of the implications drawn out, we would have liked to see them much more fully developed.

The tension felt by Catholics in Protestant countries is already being increased by pressure from several Protestant churches for more explicit declarations by the Catholic Church as to the extension of the freedom to others which she demands for herself. On subjects like this and many not less thorny ones clear thinking supposes some of the free speech for which the author pleads.

We hope that the author will work out the analogy—our Lord's own fundamental one—of the Church as a family under one Father. No father worthy of the name makes it impossible for his grown-up sons to talk to him.

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*THE WORLD TO COME.* By R. W. Gleason, S.J. (Sheed and Ward; 12s. 6d.)

This book at least makes a void visible. How near it comes to filling it is a tricky question. It is not humbug to confess that we are poorly off in English for language in which to conduct and extend theological reflection. Theology is not one of the works of super-

erogation. From the start it has been, and must always be, the way our faith becomes articulate. We can make out what we believe only by talking about it, whether by preaching, asking questions, or any of the other dozen ways we have of making ourselves articulate. If there is not much of a common theological vocabulary, it must be that something is frustrated in the faith of the community. We do not have to look far to find the *malaise* that affects the faithful when they are far more intelligent and humane than the pious literature on which they are fed.

The blurb tells us that this book is 'real theology, rounded, concrete, lively, designed to be read by human beings'. This is good, but a quotation from it will help to localize our doubt about how far it is actually carried into practice. We read on page 152: 'As regards the less spiritual senses of smell, touch, and taste, it is not so easy for us to understand in what fashion they add to the accidental glory of the soul in heaven, but that they do we do not doubt'. There may be some excuse for using 'accidental' like this, but surely there can be none for this peculiar use of 'spiritual'? And are people anything but embarrassed by the robust familiarity with the ineffable which certainly prevails in certain scholastic circles but has little kinship with the spiritual climate of our time? Parts of the book, particularly the chapter on death, are presented in terms of existentialism: this may be more urgently relevant to Fr Gleason's American readers than it is to English Catholics. But it is a pity to find that all those people who have been fobbed off for long enough with gimcrack piety still have their access to 'real theology' posted with outlandish signs. It is hard to feel the life and relevance of the rich resources of traditional Catholic wisdom, pickled but still miraculously surviving, incarcerated in neo-scholasticism. This book never speaks freely enough to give the ancient insights all the fresh, local immediacy they deserve.

But it would be misleading not to say that the ample use of scripture and St Thomas succeeds in putting into circulation certain themes that are often obscured, though really fundamental, in Catholic life. Chiding us for too often being 'pre-Christian', Fr Gleason rightly insists on the absolute primacy of the Holy Spirit as the origin and medium of our Christian lives: 'The *point* of the new testament régime, where all its power resides', as St Thomas says, 'is the grace of the Holy Spirit being given through faith in Christ'. And the later chapters give the Resurrection the weight it should always have in our lives, not as something extra but as the integral maturity for which we are destined. If we can bear with Fr Gleason's scholastic habits of mind there is a great deal in this book to strengthen and clear our spirit.