

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

DEAR SIR,

The deterrent theory of punishment put forward by Fr Kenny in the October number of BLACKFRIARS seems to me to suffer from one fatal flaw. For it would seem possible in principle to imagine a situation where no conceivable punishment would be successful as a deterrent: let us suggest some situation in which the punishment was to be secret. If the justice of a punishment is nothing more than its rightness as a deterrent, then it would clearly be *unjust* to punish such a crime. If this is what justice and injustice *mean* when applied to punishments, then it would be impossible to make a distinction between the unjust punishment of someone who was innocent, and the unjust punishment of someone when there was no possibility of deterrence. And yet these two cases are clearly distinct.

The truth is that the justice of a punishment, even if it must take into account the success the punishment may have as a deterrent, does not *mean* such successfulness. To account for the meaning of justice in this context we have to elaborate a theory of punishment which makes it a return for the crime as such, and not merely a practical act to avoid crime's consequences. It is this bearing of punishment on the crime itself which is the essential thesis of retributive theories of punishment, and not the rather vague analogies with commercial transactions which Fr Kenny criticizes.

Yours sincerely,

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### REVIEWS

#### Encounters: Mythical and Technical

WHATEVER associations of hostility the word may originally have had, an 'encounter' is now taken to mean a meeting between two parties in which difference is recognized and understanding sought at the deepest level; this must be a dialogue, not a monologue, a dialogue of image and idea. In the encounter between the West and the non-Western world this has its dangers still but they are less for the West than the non-Western. A virus may enter Europe from Macao, a mamba uncurl from among the bananas, but the materialism which follows in the tracks of the oilmen is destroying domains of human experience and creations of the human spirit more valuable than the jungles and savannahs the derricks lay waste. Recently in a broadcast four anthropologists discussed and differed over the possibility of withholding Western contacts from peoples as yet uncontaminated to give them time to assimilate the goods of the West without losing their own special virtue. But one can be sure that by

the time the West had agreed what were its own goods and virtues and how to dole them out, the derricks would be erected and another tribe would have lapsed from its own immemorial coherence into the forced co-existence of economic slavery. Without making a facile appeal to divine providence, according to which once, always and for all, human history proceeds, it seems possible that the special virtues of a people less civilized in the Western sense will survive and prove to be a virtue by surviving. The community life and ritual of the pueblos of New Mexico serve as an example, though the West will have to lose even more of its confidence before it recognizes and accepts such contributions as valid for its own well-being.

The problem of primitive religion, whether of the remote past or surviving at the present, appears at first sight to be an easy one at least for a Christian; in so far as primitive religions have gods they are idols, and in so far as they have sacraments they are disgusting. Professor Maringer<sup>1</sup> states what can be known of the gods of prehistoric man with admirable caution and the book is excellently illustrated with black-and-white photographs and line drawings. The imagery of prehistoric religion is forcefully realized. Nobody could forget the cave paintings of Lascaux, or of the Grotte des Trois Frères—where a grand assembly of animals is dominated by a dancing 'master of the beasts'—the Aurignacian Venuses or the settings of the megaliths. When it is possible Professor Maringer elucidates their significance by a prudent comparison with surviving cultures that approximate closely to the same stage of development and hints at the accompanying ritual. Hints are enough for an average modern sensibility. But it is just here that Professor Eliade issues a useful reminder that, whatever aberrations there may be from what we now know to be true religion, there are patterns of thought and desire concealed in this symbolism and iconography that lie at the base of higher religions and may be found in Christianity itself. The mastery of the animals is a case in point. It survives even today in the context of shamanic ritual as the preliminary stage of the magic flight. The shaman imitates the behaviour and the cries of beast and bird, since he 'cannot leave his body and set out on his mystical journey until he has recovered, by intimacy with the animals, a bliss and a spontaneity that would be unattainable in his profane, everyday situation'. 'To communicate with animals, to speak their language and become their friend and master is to appropriate a spiritual life much richer than the merely human life of ordinary mortals.' In present-day shamanist belief this is not an ideal to be realized in the future, but an attempt to reconquer something of a primeval state when every man had this mastery and friendship. It is of course impossible to affirm that those who painted the so-called sorcerer of Trois Frères had precisely these notions implicit in their ritual, but it would be unwise to deny the possibility and to assume the, so to speak, bestiality of primitive man who from his first appearance gives evidence of being specifically distinct from the beasts. However, it is perhaps safest to regard the present-day shamanist belief as being a first step towards a

<sup>1</sup> *The Gods of Prehistoric Man*. By Johannes Maringer. Translated by Mary Ilford. (Weidenfeld and Nicholson; 42s.)

'spiritual sense', the re-interpretation of an existing image in a higher sense in a new stage of consciousness.

In his most recently translated collection of essays Professor Eliade<sup>2</sup> examines several of these mythical themes. In general it does not add to our knowledge of the position he has taken in other books, but it does illustrate well his own approach to the phenomenology of the sacred. The nostalgia for paradise implicit in the shamanist practices, the symbol of a flight or a climb, the transformation of sense-experience by techniques and initiations of ferocious hardship, issuing sometimes in paranormal powers acknowledged by critical Western observers, all these are for Professor Eliade not so much outgrown clothes as evidence of inward structure of the soul which demand and receive interpretation at different levels of consciousness and experience. This is not to say that he sets out the archetypes of C. G. Jung like a tone-row to build his own composition on; in his treatment of, for example, the ascension symbol he makes it plain that each phenomenon, mythologem, ritual, legend, dream, must be understood first in its own total context, and only when this is complete can the full implication of the symbolic structure in each context be manifested by comparison. Two conclusions are worth mentioning and perhaps questioning here. First, 'every primordial image is the bearer of a message of direct relevance to the condition of humanity, for the image unveils aspects of ultimate reality that are otherwise inaccessible'. This seems to be overstating the case and to contain a tautology. For what is meant by a primordial image? An image found in a palaeolithic culture? or rising from the unconscious in dreams? or found to be vital symbolically at many levels? And is it true that every image of this kind reveals aspects of *ultimate* reality? Secondly, it appears in the investigation of certain of these images that there is prophecy implicit in the unconscious, in the non-conscious, sub-intellectual world of the material image, that 'the Unconscious behaves in such a way that its activity seems to *prefigure* the mode of being of the Spirit'. Professor Eliade suggests this very cautiously and in terms derived from Hindu philosophy, but stated in rather different terms it has a resemblance, and even a certain relevance, to some aspects of Christian revelation and exegesis.

At long last Fr Daniélou's influential book, *Sacramentum Futuri*,<sup>3</sup> has been translated and an interesting parallel might be drawn between the 'spiritual sense' of primordial images on the one hand and of divine interventions on the other; there occur images valid for the whole of mankind and divine acts in history for the salvation of the whole of mankind; each is given at first in the concrete and interpreted towards the spiritual, the one by the natural creativity of the human spirit, the other by divine light humbly received in the same faculty. What is needed now is a new assessment of the 'spiritual sense' such that whatever is valid in the realm of primordial images may be assumed into the context of the divine act in Christ and the

<sup>2</sup> *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries: the Encounter between Contemporary Faiths and Archaic Realities*. By Mircea Eliade. Translated by Philip Mairet. (Harvill Press; 18s.)

<sup>3</sup> *From Shadows to Reality: Studies in the Typology of the Fathers*. By Jean Daniélou, S.J. Translated by Dom Wulstan Hibberd. (Burns and Oates; 35s.)

Church. The mechanical allegorizings of certain former exegetical schools are a warning against a too easy allegorizing of archetypal images.

Professor Eliade is an explorer, but it is doubtful whether later administrators will think it worthwhile to occupy all the territories he has opened up. Dr Cuttat<sup>4</sup> moves in territories exotic but already known. The book has been translated into what must be some of the ugliest English ever printed, but it is worth struggling through the abstractions and neologisms for he has a valuable thesis to put forward regarding the encounter between Western Christianity and oriental religion. Briefly, and despite the danger of such simplification, Western theology is characterized by a bias towards the external and transcendental, oriental towards the inward and immanent. To some degree they are complementary, but as ways to God, both theologically and practically, the former can subsume the latter, not vice versa, and it is only in giving itself to the former that the latter can find its true fulfilment, that is to say, oriental inwardness both as a method of prayer and as a way to the knowledge of God can be of use technically to the Western and remains incomplete in itself unless it does itself pass from immanent metaphysics to transcendent monotheism. The book contains two essays; in the first these ideas are set out with the necessary caution and with stern warnings on the duty of true intellectual charity and the avoidance of facile identification of Western and oriental terms; in the second, Dr Cuttat examines the Hesychast theory and practice of prayer in which he sees exemplified the right relationship of the moments of immanence and transcendence and thus an important interpreter in the encounter between Orient and West. But again he issues the necessary warnings against dangers incidental to this method, dangers in fact well known to the Eastern theologians of the method. This hardly does justice to two essays which are densely written and stimulating at a more than merely speculative level. The dialogue here is concerned not merely with understanding a world of myth and thought other than our own, but also with a way of living and a contemplative technique which, however disused or debased it may be becoming in its own land under pressure from Western materialism, may find its true fulfilment in the Church once she herself has assimilated it to whatever is universal and not merely Western in herself.

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CHRISTIANITY IN A REVOLUTIONARY AGE. A History of Christianity in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, Vol. ii, The Nineteenth Century in Europe. The Protestant and Eastern Churches. By Kenneth Scott Latourette. (Eyre and Spottiswoode; 63s.)

Professor Latourette, having completed his seven-volume *History of the Expansion of Christianity*, is now at work on a history of Christianity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in five volumes. The book here reviewed is the second of these, the first having dealt primarily with Roman Catho-

<sup>4</sup> *The Encounter of Religions: a Dialogue between the West and the Orient*. With an Essay on the Prayer of Jesus. By Jacques-Albert Cuttat. Translated by Pierre de Fontnouvelle with Evis McGrew. (Desclée; 130 FB.)