

difficult to decide whether a particular statement is meant to be factual, logical, or moral. 'Times may be troubled' we are told on p. 116 'and the Cross may cast its shadow over the path of the Christian, but in him resides unperturbed a holy and profound joy.' Is this a fact about baptized persons, or is it part of the definition of a true Christian, or is it a statement about how we ought to behave?

The Master Calls is not easy to read: the style is often clumsy and turgid. This is partly because the book is a translation from the German, partly because despite the author's efforts scholastic argot sometimes obtrudes. Some of the linguistic analyses do not survive the transformation from one language into another: not all that is said in the chapter on piety and reverence is true of the English words 'piety' and 'reverence', though it may be true of their nearest German equivalents. Difficulties of this sort seem to make it doubtful whether it is worth while to translate any but the very greatest works of such analysis from one language into another. The translator's problems are brought home quaintly when we are told that there are proverbs running 'an idle mind is the devil's workshop' and 'calumniate heartily, something always sticks'. The language used about sex, as so often in books of moral theology, sends shivers down the spine. (See, for example, the passage on p. 220 beginning 'On the way to the completed act are impure looks, touches, embraces and kisses. By their very nature they beget the tendency to go to the limit . . .').

The weakest parts of the book are those which concern public morality. The Kingdom of God does not receive the full treatment accorded to other gospel concepts. The page devoted to Communism is pitifully inadequate (p. 307). Many moral principles enunciated seem to be misleading. It will not do, for instance, to say simply that 'destructive bombing can be approved of, from the moral standpoint, only if it appears effectual in hastening the end of hostilities'. (p. 340).

It is a pity that these defects should mar a book which at first sight promised extremely well.

ANTHONY KENNY

REQUIEM FOR A PARISH, by John Foster; Newman Press, \$3.00.

I must begin what would otherwise be a totally adulatory review with a double warning: first, do not be put off by the title of this book; it is not just one more depressing assessment of why parish life is moribund: and second, do not be discouraged by the rather breathless and sometimes unclear style (a second reading is well worth the effort, and actually turns out not to be an effort at all).

The mission of the parish is to form man in his wholeness. The art of the priesthood exercised in the parish through the duality of clergy and laity is a work of reconciliation, of 'at-one-ment'. This work of reconciliation is not exhausted when the parish reconciles the individual soul to God through the ministry of the sacraments and of the Word. It has also the task of

reconciling the whole man in the whole of his cosmic and social situation.

The work of the Church is a supernatural and creative treatment of *actuality*. As a true educator, she does not start where she thinks people should be, but from where they actually are.

This is Fr Foster's main theme. He quotes more than once Cardinal Mercier's dictum that after the Bible the most important study for a priest is society. Christ must be made flesh in all men—not just numerically in the sense that as many as possible be baptized—but in the whole man, and in all civilisations. The Church must become incarnate in Asiatic and African ways of thought as well as European, in the machine age as well as in feudal society. If the Church 'is to continue to preach a genuine Christianity, then it must be one whereby the Christian becomes the most engaged and the most present of men in the span of human history'. Judged by this yardstick, parish life has failed, he tells us; the 'good' parish is held to be the one whose services are best attended, whose financial needs are best supported, whose parish organisations run most efficiently—in other words the parish which lives its own life independent of the community around it. Such a parish can do little to make its members whole men, for their lives must largely be lived outside parish activities in a world totally uninfluenced by them. The result is a Christian people who are spiritually children: 'all adult members of the society in which they live and work—and all of them tremendously pleased and honoured [to be given] some toy of parish administration to play with for a while' (i.e. selling raffle tickets, sitting on bazaar committees, putting out the bingo tables.)

The basic mistake is that the organisation has become more important than the organism; and whereas an organism needs life, an organisation merely needs efficiency, and can result, as Fr Foster says, in the laity becoming a kind of 'spiritual proletariat'. And whereas an organism adapts itself to its surroundings, an organisation can continue unchanging, as our parish structures have, whatever changes may take place in the society in which it functions. The ideal of holiness then becomes a personal relationship with God to be achieved by an ever greater detachment from 'the world', spiritual direction a kind of 'beauty treatment for the individual soul'; for 'the cause and effect of most organization is to build a barrier between oneself and the rest of the world'. And once that barrier is in place, 'where the work of adaptation is left undone, members of the Church are an easy prey to the faulty ideals of a society which has come to birth without her'.

Fr Foster makes two rather surprising points. He says that the key virtue in this context is hope: avoiding the optimism of not bothering about the world because we are just waiting for the next world which we know will come, the pessimism of feeling that there is no point in trying to do anything in this world because it is worthless, we must realise that 'Christianity has put up the price of everything in the market of values and that now everything has an infinite price'. We must remember that all things are to be restored in Christ, and that it is precisely through history and our action within it that this will be

done. It is hope that makes us aware that every one of us is someone needed by God for the fulfilment of his plans. And this virtue is at last coming to the fore again, largely because of our present return to the Bible which is the great document of hope.

His other, at first even more surprising, point is that what really indicates whether a parish is alive or not is its missionary consciousness. A parish may seem to be very generous towards the foreign missions, may love to contribute to the baptizing of 'Black Babies', but if those babies come over as students wanting lodgings and no parishioners want to take them in the parish has missed the point. To be mission-conscious is to long for the mystical body to reach its total stature, by being expressed in every human culture, and our longing must be not merely to bring other nations into the fold, but to understand them, to realise the unique contribution each has to make to building up the whole Christ. To be spiritually mature is to realise that the Church's success is not measured in terms of numbers converted, but by her assimilation to every society she works in, her adaptation of 'an unchangeable divine mode of life to an ever-changing human situation'.

The book concludes with two magnificent chapters on the spirituality of the diocesan clergy and the laity. If the laity are to realise that their sanctification is not something apart from their situation in the world, but is to be effected by means of that situation, they must be formed by a clergy who realise that their own sanctification is to be worked out entirely through their service of the Christian community. 'That the clergy do not always advert to the fact that in the multifarious activities which make up the parish apostolate lies the main source of their holiness, accounts for the tendency to offer the laity a spirituality which does not find its main nourishment in carrying out the duties of *their own* state of life in the actuality of their own earthly existence'.

To sum up, this is a book of which one can say unreservedly that one hopes *everyone* will read it, and talk about it, and so renew the life of every parish in the country.

ROSEMARY SHEED

WHERE DO WE DIFFER? by Gustave Weigel, S.J.; Burns and Oates, 12s 6d.

Fr Weigel is professionally engaged in teaching Catholic doctrine about the Church, in a seminary. He is also frequently asked to speak to non-Catholic Christians about the Church and what she teaches. This small book contains seven such speeches, the first three of them being the Taylor Lectures delivered at Yale Divinity School for the year 1960. The first and the third of the Taylor Lectures are the best in the book: *Catholic Ecclesiology in Our Time*, and *Sacrament and Symbol*. In them, according to his Foreword, Fr Weigel was trying to translate 'Catholic expressions into a language better known to non-Catholics', and his success is considerable. In the first lecture he frankly admits the polemical