

say that Cardinal Wojtyla went 'into the crucible of the conclave' is striking but meaningless. Krakow is described as 'the heartbeat of dissent', a good phrase, but we need some evidence for it. I like 'his ski-strong arms'. There is a constant reliance on what 'an official' or 'a close friend' or 'an experienced Vatican observer' are reputed to have said.

These shadowy figures provide most of what could be called interpretation. One of them remarked that 'there is a spirit of vitality, of youthful energy blowing through the centuries-old apostolic palace'. Most of the evidence for this judgment consists of anecdotes, welcome enough in their way, about 'the battle of wits with tradition-bound Vatican officials'. These starched shirts don't like the pope touch-

ing people and tossing small boys up in the air. But this is hardly *aggiornamento*. The serious question concerns the ends to which this unaccustomed energy—and the pope's undoubted popularity with crowds—will be put. On this theme the book is disappointing. True, the manuscript seems to have been delivered at about Christmas time—there is no mention of Puebla or of the encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, and Cardinal Villot is still alive and well. If we are to trust 'one observer', the outlook is grim: 'Let there be no mistake, his whole past shows that he will be prepared to swing those Keys of Peter to devastating effect should he deem it necessary'. Prepare to duck.

PETER HEBBLETHWAITE

CATHOLIC EDUCATION: THE UNOBTRUSIVE PARTNER by Michael Hornsby-Smith, *Sheed & Ward, London 1978. pp. 150 £7.50*

Dr Hornsby-Smith offers his book, as he tells us in the preface, for two different audiences. He hopes it will be of interest to students who are studying the sociology of education, and to those people who are interested in Catholic education; parents, teachers, priests etc. As someone who is not a sociologist, I fit into the latter group. I find the first part of the book rather limited but in fairness to the author he admits its limitations. This first section deals with various aspects of Catholic education such as the growth of Catholic education during the post-war years. He goes on to deal with arguments for and against Catholic schools, the attitudes of Catholic adolescents to religion, surveyed in a few Catholic and State schools in the South of England (this is the part I find particularly limited), he then goes on to view Higher Education and the Catholic systems in Australia and the United States.

From here onwards I find the book particularly interesting (p. 111). Here the author is concerned with education as a continuing process. He looks at "... the different needs of Catholics at the various stages in their life-cycles" (p. 113). The great need for adult education is stressed and though there is a great need, up to the present little has been done in this field. In places where the problem is being tackled it can be costly and so limited to a few. To help cope with this problem the author rightly points out, "It is important

to consider the contribution which Catholic teachers can play in areas outside the school and for adult age groups as well as their contribution within Catholic Schools for school children" (p. 113). Surely adult Catholic education could be carried out at parish level by teachers so that the gospel can be preached to the poor.

Dr Hornsby-Smith continues to raise many more important points too numerous to deal with here because of lack of space. But I would like to mention one of them. It is a problem the author of the book has been concerned with for many years; the non-attendance at Mass of young people. He believes that it is "an area of major importance where research needs to be undertaken" (p. 120). He tells us that half of the children who attend Catholic schools cease to go to Mass and that we do not know why this happens. I think we do know one short sharp answer: they find it boring. It does not make any sense in their lives. As far as they are concerned 'it is a repeat of the same old stuff' to quote one teenager, and this reflects the attitude of most. The question which needs to be raised here is about the content of religious education and not only in the classroom but in every place where Catholic education takes place. Christianity is about freedom, the freedom to become a mature person in Christ. It is not about being a heteronomous person and sadly the Church has left and seems con-

tent to leave people at this stage. Christianity is about becoming an autonomous person. If young people are led to believe that Christianity is only a set of rules, then can they be blamed for turning away? Christianity is a challenge for mature people, it is not a soft option nor is it an escape from the realities and many problems of life but in facing up to and coping with them. This, I believe, should be the content of religious education, and

then prayer and the sacraments will begin to make sense to the young.

The author has 'offered' his book to those interested in Catholic education. I hope the offer will be accepted by those for whom the book has been aimed and that the questions raised will be considered urgently and acted upon and not just talked about and then shelved or placed in the 'pending' tray.

H. WILSON

THINKING ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS by Edward Rogers

THINKING ABOUT EDUCATION by Krister Ottosson

THINKING ABOUT RURAL DEVELOPMENT by Ralph Whitlock. Lutterworth Press. 1978 £2.25 each.

To quote the editor of this series, these books are intended '... to provide teachers of many subjects with a common basis and starting point for co-operation in helping pupils to discover some links between history, geography, economics, culture politics, sociology and religious studies.' This is quite a modest goal when material dealing with the important issue of third world development is presented in such a clear, concise and attractive way. The series will have a much more profound effect on its readers. Politically-orientated religious teachers (are there any religious teachers worthy of the name who aren't?) are faced with the difficulty of firing the interest of their pupils in problems which seem far enough away to be easily ignored. The series should be invaluable in helping to overcome this.

Anyone wishing to make a first enquiry in the field of human rights could do no better than to read 'Thinking About Human Rights.' Almost every aspect of human rights is, at least, mentioned, if not discussed, but if we look for a discussion of the philosophical issues involved we will not find it. For example, on the fundamental question of where human rights originate, we are told, '... they belong to our God-given heritage, and are not the capricious gift of governments.' This may be true but it would have been more satisfying to find a bit of argument to back up this hypothesis. The reader must glean the philosophy from the text or, if he can't find any, provide his own. And this is what the book sets out to do, to get people to think and to read more about universal justice. The whole of the final chapter poses questions to set one thinking and

discussing. Throughout, the author has tried to be as fair as possible, with the result that none of the developed countries comes out of the human rights issue smelling of roses. All in all this is a very worthwhile publication and I hope it will eventually be issued in paperback so it will more-easily reach the larger public it deserves.

'Thinking about Education', although dealing with less emotive issues, is worth investigation. As the author says, '... it is through education that a change can be made in the basic attitudes of people-- a change of attitudes which must come before there can be any worthwhile changes in the economic and social structures of society.' We, in the developed countries, have 'domesticating education', that is, we educate to perpetuate the status quo. 'Liberating education' is what we, just as much as the developing countries, need if we are to obtain a system worthy of the name of education.

I was under the impression that great strides had been made in rural development, but Ralph Whitlock, author of 'Thinking About Rural Development', presents a very gloomy picture. He has spent more than thirty years of his life as a farmer-- a group not well-known for their optimism. It is the prospect of future overpopulation that depresses him and he offers no solution for this.

The books are very well laid-out. Perhaps they are too well-presented on high quality paper with lots of good photographs, bound between thick glossy boards. Still, they should stand up to a lot of use. They are intended to be used and deservedly so.

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