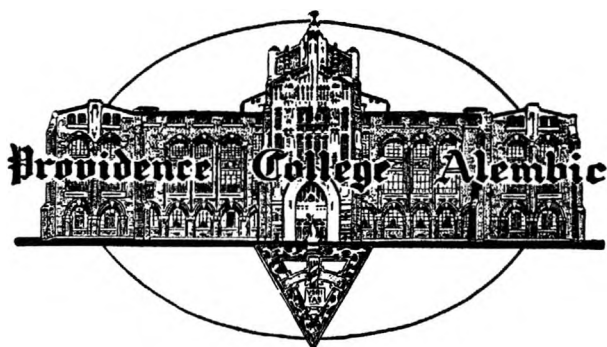


THE ALEMBIC



APRIL, 1953

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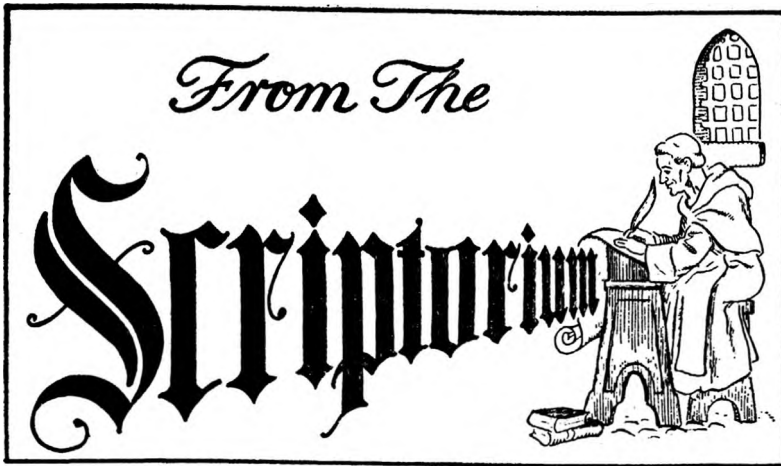
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MARCH is a notable month. After February, it proverbially roars in like a lion. Julius Caesar uttered his monumental "Et tu, Brute" in this month. Income tax must be paid by the 15th and Spring is ushered in on the 21st. What is most notable of March, though, is the fact that the 7th is the Feast of Thomas Aquinas, Saint, Doctor, Patron of the Schools.

The mention of Thomas usually calls to mind theology. It should. Thomas has no peers in regard to that science. However, Thomas was also a philosopher. The greatest system of philosophy the world has bears his name, Thomism. It is of that system we wish to speak here.

Because its originator was a saint, and because it has been closely connected with the Catholic Church over the centuries, Thomism is ignored or tolerated as an antiquated and medieval system of philosophy which has no use in the modern world. Also, since it is used a great deal in the theology of the Church, it has been identified with theology and, consequently, it is viewed as impractical and unchanging. Both of these views are erroneous because they betray fundamental misconceptions about Thomism.

Certainly a saint was its originator. One cannot deny a fact. So what? Saints are real people; they are not completely immersed in the spiritual. Besides, Saint Thomas was not the only mind that was involved in the foundation of Thomism. He took the best from the

great Greek minds, Plato and Aristotle, and from the early Church Fathers to form his system. Certainly Thomism has been connected with the Catholic Church. Why not? It is the best system of philosophy that has been brought forth from the mind of man and the Church wants to have only the best. It is used in theology but it is not theology. Theology rests on divine foundations; Thomism has never made any pretensions of having itself classified as a divine science. Thomism is not based on articles of faith but on reason, human reason.

Perhaps that is why there is so much opposition to it. Modern philosophies do not give much credit to the strength of human reason. Some are not even sure man can reason. Others say that he can reason but he can never be sure of the things he knows. Thomism does not fret itself about these things. Certainly a man can reason and when he uses his reason correctly he can arrive at truth. Truth is not a shadowy chimera that is constantly eluding the mind of man. It can be had. It is had in Thomism.

Thomism is known as the *philosophia perennis*, the Everlasting Philosophy. Why? Well, for one thing, truth is unchanging. Once it is had it does not disintegrate into error of itself. Only men can corrupt the truth, not nature. That is why Thomism does not change basically; it is built on truth. How do we know it is true? Because it was authored by a saint? Because it is the philosophy of the Catholic Church? No. There is another reason.

For a philosophy to be true, two conditions must be met. It must not contradict any human experience and it must give a satisfactory explanation of man's experience. If a philosophy does not meet these two requirements, it is not true. In the case of Thomism, both conditions are fulfilled. This does not mean that all other philosophies are completely false. There is found in other systems much that is true, but along with the true there is enough error to nullify the system as a complete system of thought.

Another reason why Thomism is the perennial philosophy is that it is a living philosophy; it is not static. Immobility in a philosophy would soon lead it to decadence and death. Thomism is kept ever alive for there are men in every age who have taken its principles and, proceeding on them, have interpreted the thought of their day through them, extracting what was good and casting aside what was bad. In this way, the thought of Saint Thomas can be seen in all ages, always present, always new, and always the *philosophia perennis*.

Thomism does not require a man to come into its fold on his hands and knees. It does not beat him into subjection, nor is there need for intellectual violence. Because the cards are all on the table, face up, Thomists can say take a look. We have no hidden tricks, no jokers, no aces up our sleeves. Here is our explanation of reality. It fits the picture. It fits the experiences of men. The mind of man was made to know truth. Here it is. Thomism.

J. M.

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Priest, Scholar and Philosopher

By ROBERT E. HOYE, '53

“THIS ox will one day fill all the world with his bellowing.” These words as prophesied by Albert the Great are so true that they seem to pervade our very minds in accompaniment with the bellowing of the “Dumb Ox.” Albertus Magnus was a remarkable scholar and teacher, but on the basis of the aforementioned quotation, we may call him an excellent judge of character. He, alone, recognized the genius of one of his own pupils, who studied and contemplated to such a degree that he appeared mute and morbid compared to his fellow students. Hence, this same disciple of his was labeled the “Dumb Ox” by his classmates, who, as was eventually seen, could not compare with him intellectually. Of course, this “ox” was none other than St. Thomas Aquinas, *Doctor Angelicus*.

II

St. Thomas was born in 1225 in the castle at Rocca Secca near Aquino, Italy. As always occurred with the birth of a son in royal families, there was much rejoicing. This was short lived, however, when a holy hermit from nearby came to the castle and foretold of the wonderful spiritual life in store for the new child. The prophecy was forgotten very soon, but little did any of his royal relatives dream of the influence that this kin of theirs would have on the Christian world in years to come.

As a boy, he led a very normal life, being taught by the Benedictine Monks according to the custom of the times. As

a pupil, he showed remarkable capabilities in the field of theology and abstract thinking, and became deeply interested in the Order of St. Dominic. Upon completion of his studies with the monks, he decided to become a Dominican friar, and this move, of course, was met with much disapproval from his whole household. He was firm in his decision, however, and, as a friar, was sent by the order to Paris to study. Partly to evade the opposition of his family and partly because of the great ability he showed in theological questions.

En route to Paris he was waylaid by his own brothers and was imprisoned in a locked tower for over a year. In all this time, however, he was not idle and several incidents occurred during his enforced stay that showed the firmness of character that he possessed and his eagerness to pursue any and all intellectual *truths*. Finally, he was released by his mother and he journeyed to Paris to study under the most noted teacher of theological doctrine of this time, Albert the Great. It was during this period, from 1244 to 1248, that he received the nickname "Dumb Ox" from his fellow pupils.

The rest of his life can be summed up by five small words, but to say just a little for each one of them concerning St. Thomas would fill volumes. He devoted the rest of his life to *praying, preaching, writing, teaching and journeying*. He taught and lectured at St. Jacques and Paris and in 1261 was called by Pope Urban IV to teach and lecture at Pisa, Bologna and Rome. Later, he was sent to Naples where he wrote and taught from 1271 until shortly before his death in 1274. It was at Naples that he is known to have had a vision of Christ, who said to him; "You have written ably about Me. What reward would you have?" Thomas very quickly and simply replied, "Lord, nothing except Thyself."

Finally, in about 1274 he was asked to go to Lyons by

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Pope Gregory to help in a council to decide the fate of several merging churches. He took sick while journeying and was taken to his niece's castle at Ceccano, Italy. He asked to be moved to a nearby Cistercian monastery, because he knew he was in the throes of a fatal illness and he wished to die in a holy place. He died there at Fossa Nuova on March 7, 1274,

Throughout his short life of only 49 years, he became a noted lecturer, scholar and writer and always enjoyed the highest consideration of the Church. In 1263 he was offered an Archbishopric by Pope Clement IV, but he refused it to continue his writing, lecturing and teaching. He was canonized about fifty years after his death in 1323 by Pope John XXII, as a result of the requests of his ever faithful order. His canonization was marred by the opposition of some men who were more or less jealous of the high esteem in which the Church and his order placed him. But as always, St. Thomas' great relish for *truth and rightfulness* was portrayed even after death and he was canonized, only to have his relics so sought after that they were the cause of much dispute.

III

In speaking or writing of the works of the "Doctor Communis," as he was often called, there must necessarily be a two fold distinction made in the mind of the writer or speaker. First, one must consider St. Thomas' actual written works and, secondly, one must consider his unwritten doctrine, his systems, and, above all, the general effect that his ideas have had on Christianity and especially Catholicism.

Probably one of his first well known works was the commentary on the defense of his order and doctrines before the Pope after he had been attacked by members of the University of Paris. This was oral as well as written, but it was the launching of a new ship of literature upon the seas of

Christendom. To enumerate and comment on all the works of St. Thomas, one would spend a lifetime as he did in writing them. However, five of his works stand out above all the others and one of these five is one of the most widely read theological treatises in existence today. These five works are the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, *Commentaria in IV libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, *Questiones Disputatae et Quodlibetales*, *Opuscula Theologica* and the *Summa Theologica*. The latter is by far his greatest, but unfortunately was not finished, since he died in the process of writing it.

Much can be said of the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, which was finished about 1264. It was apologetic rather than constructive in method and contents and Thomas showed in this writing one of his greatest virtues. This virtue was that he criticized no one, but persuaded rather than denounced his opposition. This is the mark of a *true scholar*. The *Summa Theologica*, on the other hand, holds one of the highest places in literature of and about the Church and its teachings. It is a summation of all his previous works which seem as a preview to this great production. The *Summa Theologica* as opposed to the *Summa Contra Gentiles* is very constructive in its aim and method. It is a compendious treatise on Catholic theology, and is a summary of philosophy taken almost directly from Aristotle, to whom he was almost completely devoted.

St. Thomas' writings must be spoken of as a whole, rather than separately, to explain the full scope of his genius and to receive the proper appreciation of it. He shows remarkable diligence and eloquence of zeal and it is often said that he worked so hard in his capacity as author, teacher, servant to his order and advisor to the Popes that he, himself, was responsible for his own early death. Nevertheless, his literary produce was enormous in this short span and the most amazing

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aspect of his writings is that they are still very easy to read even for the modern mind. Also, because he adjusted his beliefs to the scientific and philosophical thought of his age, he left very little imperfect or incomplete, in these respects, except that which is incomplete and imperfect as to human nature itself.

Many have condemned his devotedness to Aristotle, but few have been able to accuse him of being an imitator. One only needs to view the scope and variety of St. Thomas' works to refute such a fallacy. However, he used Aristotle extensively in his philosophical doctrines as well as Plato and St. Augustine, but his method of handling their ideas has given St. Thomas a superiority over all of them. This confirmation of the works of Aristotle is considered as one of the five great achievements of St. Thomas considered abstractly. The other four are: (1) the distinction he made between natural and supernatural truths; (2) his doctrine of moderate realism; (3) his doctrine of the Active Intellect; and (4) his works as an intellectualist.

In addition to the aforementioned labors, St. Thomas was a profound Bible student, the "Father of Moral Philosophy" and a poet. His hymns for Corpus Christi are still favorites in both liturgical and extra-liturgical functions.

IV

Considering just the compositions that St. Thomas has left, one can easily recognize the tremendous effect he must have and has had on the people of the world. His works have become the basis of Scholastic philosophy, theological doctrine (i.e. of all the teachings of Catholic doctrine) and of the truth in general. St. Thomas developed the truth, stuck to it and has shown that it was no stronger in any other

Christian writer from St. Augustine's time. The *value of truth*, whether found in the writings of Protestants, Catholics, Jews, or atheists has received no deeper appreciation than what St. Thomas has given to it.

One could relate endlessly the countless virtues of Saint Thomas Aquinas, as a man, a priest, a scholar and a philosopher; but the late Bishop of Buffalo has very ably summed up his life as follows: "Taking him, all in all, there is no theologian who deserves and rewards study more than he, and the Church does well in accepting him as her great master in theology."

To change the verb tense in the prophecy of St. Albertus Magnus, one follows the truth as closely as St. Thomas did himself in saying:

"This ox *has filled* all the world with his bellowing."

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The Hungry Man and the Missionary

By DAVID J. KARL '56

FOLLOWING the course of countless others before him, the bearded, unkempt stranger hastily made his way along the path to the weather-beaten cabin of the country's only missionary. At the doorway he paused, smiling disdainfully, but a feeling of delirium caused him to clutch the rough exterior to keep his equilibrium.

"He'd better have somethin' to eat," the man muttered through his tightly compressed lips, "or else I'll . . ."

He wiped his mouth with his dirty palm, hitched up his baggy pants belligerently, then rapped on the door. He waited. As he shifted impatiently from foot to foot, a thought crossed his mind. Supposing that the missionary wasn't home! His furtive eyes hardened. Well, you could always break in. These guys never go hungry. He repeated his rapping on the door and rattled the knob.

He stepped to the window wondering if it were locked.

"I'm sorry if I've kept you waiting," said a deep, apologetic voice behind him.

He swung around. The missionary stood in the doorway, a tall figure in a faded cassock, his bronzed face creased with a smile, his pale blue eyes appraising the stranger.

"Won't you come in?" he invited, leading the way into the single room. He stooped to light the oil lamp, his thin form causing grotesque patterns on the unpainted walls.

"What can I . . ." he began pleasantly.

"I'm hungry!" interrupted the visitor harshly, drop-

ping his big hands on the board table. "Ain't had nothin' to eat for days, see? on the lam. They chased me out'a town. I want some place to sleep—or money for a place to stay. An' I ain't leavin' here 'til I get it! See?"

He leaned forward menacingly.

The missionary smiled calmly, "Of course you aren't," he assured. "You came to the right place. My cooking isn't the best in the world," he laughed, "but my efforts haven't given me indigestion yet."

"All right, all right, let's have somethin'. Anything."

Again the stranger wiped his mouth with the back of his hand.

"I understand," said the missionary, going to the cupboard, "want to wash?"

"I'll eat first," snapped the stranger.

"We'll eat together," corrected the other, bustling about, setting out cups and plates noisily.

His visitor, making no offer to help, stood watching and waiting, his mind intent upon but one thing — food. When the tantalizing aroma of coffee began to permeate the room, he strained toward it, his gaunt face twitching, his nostrils distended. In that moment he was primeval, over-powered by purely physical desire.

Striding over to the table he grasped a cup and approached the fireplace, where the coffee was boiling.

"Sit down now, and I'll serve," coaxed the missionary, snapping the steaming vessel from the eager hand.

"For God's sake, hurry up!" cried the other.

"Easy man, easy," was the soft admonition. The host surveyed the table—bread, butter, bacon, eggs and coffee—and was satisfied that all was ready.

He slipped into his chair and, simultaneously, two bony claws darted toward the bread and butter.

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"Wait!" commanded the missionary. "First we pray!"

Startled by the sharpness of his tone, the hungry man hesitated.

"Pray!" he exclaimed, then he laughed insolently. "Go ahead, parson, don't let me stop you."

Flushing, the clergyman controlled his rising anger. With one quick motion, he pushed the food out of reach, at which the stranger gripped the table-knife and half-rose, snarling viciously.

"Sit down," ordered the missionary in a firm, steady voice. "You came to me asking for food, shelter, money. All I ask in return is that you pray, that you thank God for what He gives. You've no right to eat until you do so!"

"No right to eat!" flung back the other angrily. "Am I supposed to starve? I've got a right to live, ain't I?"

"Why have you?" was the unexpected reply.

"Huh?"—For a moment he stared. "I get it. I'm just a bum. I don't work, so I ain't supposed to eat. If I wasn't so weak, I'd beat you to a pulp!"

"No, no. You misunderstand me," returned the preacher, waving his hand in deprecation. "What I mean is this: God created you because He willed it—you don't belong to yourself, but to Him. You've a definite purpose in the scheme of things—not merely to eat, sleep or live. Remember what He said about the birds of the air and the lilies of the field? Or have you heard?"

"Yeah. The lilies of the field took me for plenty. They don't work or spin, just look for suckers like me." Some of the bitterness left the speaker's face. He smiled, remembering, then waved the knife in his hand for emphasis.

"Sure I've heard that line, parson. But why don't He look after me a little better than this?"

"That's where I've got you," returned the missionary quietly. "If you do a lot of favors for someone, and they forget to thank you, or even ignore you entirely, what's the natural reaction?"

"I'd tell them where to go," was the quick reply.

"All right. Now, if you do the same to God, to whom you owe everything, then I say what right have you to live?"

"Never mind myself. Maybe I don't deserve nothin' better. But how about other folks who live a clean life an' don't get nothin' but the sour breaks?"

"That's presuming to be as smart as God Himself, isn't it? If we could understand God's reasons, that would make us equal to God, wouldn't it?"

"I don't know. I guess so," answered the other, as if making a great discovery. "So what?"

"That's where prayer comes in. You wouldn't hit a man, then ask him for a favor—it's the same with God—none of us are saints—so no matter what we get out of life, it's all a favor from Him. That's why I ask you to pray before eating."

Anxiously he watched the results of his exhortation, offering up a silent prayer for the man across the table.

The stranger, lost in the battle waging within him, was staring at the plate before him. Suddenly he glanced up and met the earnest blue eyes of the missionary. He smiled feebly.

"You win, parson. You got a great line. But first you'll have to teach me how—it's been a long time."

In a voice that trembled with emotion, the missionary intoned the Grace.

Whittaker Chambers as a Witness

By JOHN MARTISKA '53

*De profundis clamavi ad te, Domine;
Domine, exaudi vocem meam.
Fiant aures tuae intendentes
In orationem servi tui.**

MR. WHITTAKER CHAMBERS has written an impressive book. It is impressive in its size (799 pages). It is impressive in its scope, discussing world philosophy and Communism. It has aroused a tremendous amount of comment and criticism. In style and in rhetoric it has few peers among present day books. Even the mechanical makeup is impressive—black cover and black flyleaves, with the author's name in huge red letters on the title page.

The book takes its title—"Witness"***—from the fact that Chambers was a witness not only against Hiss in that famous case, but he was also a witness against 20th century materialism. What is the theme of the book? Chambers gave the answer at the 1952 New York *Herald Tribune* Forum "The book [Witness] had one, and only one overriding theme—the dignity of man under God—man erring, sinning, suffering, seeking—man in the 20th century, committing its characteristic crimes and follies, floundering in the trough of its political confusions, its moral and intellectual chaos. But

*From the depths I have cried to Thee, Oh Lord; Lord hear my voice.
Let Thine ears be attentive to the prayer of Thy servant.

Psalm 129

***"Witness," Whittaker Chambers, Random House, New York, N. Y., 1952
All quotations used are from this edition.

also, man, struggling at last, by grace and the exercise of that freedom which God gives him to distinguish between good and evil, to bring to the rescue of the threatened freedom of all other men the only thing that life had left to bring—the witness of his follies and his sins.”

In discussing such a ponderous book, one which, incidentally, has to be read more than once to grasp its more subtle meanings, it is necessary to divide it into several sections for easier handling. Three divisions are possible: autobiographical, political, religious. These three are all integrated into one complete whole in the text but they can be separated for our purposes without damage to their substances.

Chambers' life can be seen in five epochs. The first is his unhappy and distracted childhood and adolescence; the second in his career in the Communist Party; and the third is his break with the Party and the ten years at *Time*. Then follow the Hiss revelations and the aftermath of the trial. The final epoch is his present life as a farmer.

He was born Jay Vivian Chambers, in 1901, of mixed Dutch, French, German, and English extraction. Father Chambers was a commercial artist. His mother had been a stock company actress. Since his father had never wanted children, Chambers' early life was not happy, due to the constant quarreling between his parents. This quarreling finally ended in his father's leaving home for a few years. Grandmother Chambers went insane and took to wandering about the house, at times brandishing a butcher knife. His grandfather, a newspaperman, always took Whittaker and his brother on tours of the local taverns when he came to visit the Chambers' home.

After high school graduation, young Chambers ran away from home and worked as a day laborer in New Orleans

Whittaker Chambers as a Witness

and Washington, D. C. When he returned home he entered Columbia. It was during his stay at Columbia, after a trip to Europe, that he entered the Communist Party. He had toyed with the idea for some time, but after reading a booklet, "A Soviet At Work," he was convinced that Communism was the only salvation for the world.

It is in the discussion of his own family that Chambers' prose reaches its apex. His reiteration of his brother's suicide is a moving piece. "In the morning, I was awakened by the telephone ringing. I heard my mother hurry to answer it. The instrument fell from her hand. I heard it strike the floor. One single, terrible scream swelled through the house. I knew, even before I reached my mother's side, that my brother had at last killed himself."

Later, his father dies. "My father lay naked on a stretcher. One of his arms was dangling. From this arm, near the shoulder, his blood, the blood that had given my brother and me life, was pouring, in a thin, dark arc, into a battered mop bucket. We buried my father beside my brother." Here again is greatness in prose. It is rhetoric with conviction.

One cannot read the pages describing his life without feeling a creeping of the flesh. His insane grandmother, his brother's suicide, the scene in which his father nearly beat his brother to death, his own attempt at suicide, his break with Communism "slowly, reluctantly and in agony," and the immolation he suffered while serving as a witness. Why does he tell us all these things? He desires to give a complete picture of his life, so that we can follow the steps leading to his present condition. Besides this, all of the drama gives a certain *tour de force* to his story. His book is "about what happened—translated into the raw, painful, ugly, crumpled,

confused, tormented, pitiful acts of life.” In sketching his life, he has fulfilled this statement to a remarkable degree. As a storyteller, Chambers will have few peers, but as regards his political views, he suffers a letdown in genius, or at least a diminishing of excellence.

Chambers has a great deal to say about crises. He talks continually about this crisis or that crisis. In fact, it was the crisis of history that drove him to the Communist Party. Just what a crisis is Chambers never ventures to say but he knows that one exists in the present day. On page seven, he uses the word eleven times. Turning the page (8), he advances what he thinks are the causes of the crisis we are now in. “In part, the causes of the crisis (we are now in) results from the impact of science and technology upon mankind which, neither socially nor morally, has caught up with the problems posed by that impact. In part, it is caused by men’s efforts to solve those problems.” What Chambers has done here is to come close to the trouble but he does not have the real cause. He has only the after effects. He should remember that by studying the history of what we were would explain a good deal about what we are now. Communism is the ultimate fruit of the Reformation.

In order to understand this we must remember that it was the Catholic Church which has given the world the culture it now has. It has given us our whole philosophy of life. It was she that developed a free peasantry to replace the old slave-state. It was she who ordered by rule and custom, the economic structure of Society. It was she who guarded against excessive competition. It was she who insisted that men were connected by status (position) not by contact (rights guarded by the state). It was under her help and guidance that the Guilds rose and flourished. Above all, she

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gave to men a faith upon which to regulate their lives by a moral and ethical code that had its roots in divinity. The Reformation went far to destroy many of these concepts.

Of course, there were other developments after the Reformation which contributed to the modern temper of materialism, but it was the Reformation which led to these things. It spawned 17th and 18th century rationalism, the vicious Capitalism of the 19th century, Darwin's "Origin of Species," Marx's "Das Kapital." It led to the dissolution of marriage, raised nationalism to idolatry, destroyed common standards, and relegated the supernatural to superstition. Because of these things, we have a crisis today. Because of these things we have Communism.

Chambers gives no definition of crisis. He should have for if we understand what a crisis is we can understand our present precarious position. A crisis is a strain. It is an unstable equilibrium which results from unbalance between the component parts and the outside circumstances. This crisis or strain that we witness today is the fruit of social injustice that has its roots snaking back three hundred years to the Reformation. Its direct causes are many: economic insecurity, the exploitation of man by man, moral callousness, the misery of people, gross materialism, and feeble spirituality. These are the factors of the crisis. What is the result of these factors? Communism.

What Chambers identifies as Communism has little resemblance to what is generally known as Communism. According to him, Adam and Eve were the world's first members of this evil, for he says, "It is not new. It is, in fact, man's second oldest faith. Its promise was whispered in the first days of the Creation . . . 'Ye shall be as gods'." Further in the same paragraph, "the Communist vision is the vision

of Man without God." In short, Communism to Chambers is based on faith in Man.

Undoubtedly there is much truth to what he says here, for history is studded with philosophies and faiths that have placed Man at the summit, but Communism as previously known would not come under this idea. To most Communism is based neither on Man nor in Men but in undeviating history which points the way to the destruction of the capitalists and bourgeoisie. Its goal is the dictatorship of the proletariat, the "classless society," where every person is just a small part of a vast machine. Its philosophy is atheistic and materialistic, and its method is violent and bloody revolution. It not only denies the liberties of man but also denies the dignity of man.

He insists that it is a faith, and rightly so, for that is just what it is, but yet there are times when he seemingly forgets this. For example, on page eighty-three he says, "If I had rejected only Communism, I would have rejected only one political expression of the modern mind . . ." Again, speaking of why some men become Communists, ". . . as an effort to save by political surgery whatever is sound in the foredoomed body of a civilization . . ." This confounding of faith and politics does not seem warranted but Chambers carries the idea far when he speaks of the New Deal.

When he took his "first hard look" at it he found that it was not a reform movement at all but a genuine revolution with a decided drift towards socialism. It was a struggle for power between business and politics and in Chambers' eyes, politics won. A man's opinion of the New Deal is his own affair. Whether it is socialistic or not has been a matter of some debate for years but no one has gone as far as Chambers in his indictment of it. To him New Dealers and Com-

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munists were different only in the names they bore. "Thus men who sincerely abhorred the word Communism, in the pursuit of common ends found that they were unable to distinguish Communists from themselves . . ." Somewhat further in the same paragraph, "For men who could not see that what they firmly believed was liberalism added up to socialism, could scarcely be expected to see what added up to Communism."

This blanket indictment of our past leaders and policies has the virtue of convenience but the vice of oversimplification. While liberalism is a term that has been defined and redefined so many times that it has lost most of its meaning, it still stands for something besides Communism. Perhaps Chambers is justified in his universal distrust of liberals but it seems to me that he has carried his distrust beyond reason. It has become too much of a vogue in the present day to label as communistic or subversive, ideas which do not mesh with one's own. Terms such as socialist, left-wing intellectual, fellow traveller, dupe, parlor pink etc., have been bandied about so much that they are now used to cover anyone at anytime provided the circumstances are opportune. What the precise shading of Communistic thought is in certain men or in ideas is terribly hard to distinguish, if it can be found at all. However, accusing people of Communism is a serious charge and it is one that should be handled with care and by those that have the proper authority to cope with problems such as this.

Chambers' political views are further reflected in his sense of doom and pessimism about the future. When he decided to testify he knew that he "was leaving the winning world for the losing world . . . I knowingly chose the side of probable defeat. Almost nothing that I have observed, or

that has happened to me since, has made me think that I was wrong about the forecast." We are fighting Communism—the Korean War, NATO, Point Four—but the job is tremendously difficult and requires the efforts of all of the free peoples of the world. Success will not be acquired overnight but the fight is being waged and we will surely win not because we wish to win but because we have to. Communism may well be "the central experience of the first half of the 20th century," but along with intelligent policies and what Chambers calls a "power of faith," the second half of this century will see its destruction.

Because any break with Communism is what he calls a "religious experience," Chambers has much to say about religion and God. God has spoken to him at least once. He was coming down the stairs in his Mount Royal Terrace house in Baltimore. "As I stepped down into the dark hall, I found myself stopped, not by a constraint, but by a hush of my whole being. In this organic hush, a voice said with perfect distinctness: 'If you will fight for freedom, all will be well with you.'" With this divine authorization, Chambers went forward in his expose which "turned a finger of fierce light into the suddenly opened and reeking body of our time."

Throughout his book, Christ is seldom mentioned and then only in passing. The Catholic Church as the foe of Communism, never. This is rather strange because he uses Christian concepts of morals and ethics. The Catholic Church has denounced Communism for over a hundred years and thousands of her faithful and priests have died and are still dying under Communist brutality. He says that "Communists are that part of mankind which recovered the power to live or die—to bear witness—for its faith." What of the upwards of four hundred million Catholics? Surely the great majority of

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them would bear witness for their faith. Chambers does not even give them existence.

His analysis of modern man is penetrating. It is found in "Witness" but it appeared in a cover story of Reinhold Niebuhr for *Time* magazine. "Modern man knows almost nothing about the nature of God, almost never thinks about it, and is complacently unaware that there may be any reason to . . . Under the bland influence of the idea of progress, man, supposing himself more and more to be the measure of all things, has achieved a singularly easy conscience and an almost hermetically smug optimism. The idea that man is sinful and needs redemption has been subtly charged into the idea that man is by nature good, and hence capable of indefinite perfectibility. This perfectibility is being achieved through technology, science, politics, social reform, education.

"And yet, as 20th-century civilization reaches a climax, its own paradoxes grow catastrophic. The incomparable technological achievement is more and more dedicated to the task of destruction. Man's marvelous conquest of space has made total war a household experience, and, over vast reaches of the world, the commonest of childhood memories . . . Men have never been so educated, but wisdom, even as an idea, has conspicuously vanished from the world." One would have to look long and far for such an accurate and just indictment of the modern man and his world.

He speaks much of Christian charity and the dignity of man but the cause of these—Christ—he does not mention. Human dignity stems from the Incarnation. Because Christ took a human shape, Christian faith has regarded the human person as sacred. Where Chambers received his notion of human dignity he does not say. He claims that the problem of evil is the central problem of human life. Here again he

is wrong. Evil is a thing that is everpresent but it is not the central problem. Redemption, that is, salvation of one's soul, is the central problem and the central task of life; and it is through Christ that this is accomplished for He alone has given to us the means of rising above and conquering evil. Chambers believes that this can be accomplished by faith in God, but the God he has in mind does not seem to offer much help, for He is a God that we are unable to know.

Chambers has no use for reason or knowledge in religion. "Religion begins at the point where reason and knowledge are powerless and forever fail . . ." He holds that God cannot be known save for mysticism. This scorn of man's reasoning powers is a typically Protestant notion and to hold it means to destroy all of the great writings of St. Thomas, St. Augustine, St. Bonaventure and all of the great Fathers of the Church. Man's reasoning powers are definitely limited but they do not exclude his thinking and reasoning about God. It would be a cruel God indeed Who would implant in man's mind the quest for Himself and then refuse him the power to be able to know Him even in an obscure and cloudy way. This, however, causes Chambers no qualms except perhaps in one place.

In his Foreword, he dates his break with Communism with a look at his daughter's ear. "My eye came to rest on the delicate convolutions of her ear—those intricate, perfect ears . . . No, those ears were not created by any chance coming together of atoms in nature. They could have been created only by immense design." From here he proceeded to the logical conclusion that with design one must have a designer. He found God through the use of reason, but that does not seem to influence his present position.

His belief that men must worship God in common and

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that He can only be known by mysticism led him to become a member of the Religious Society of Friends, the Quakers. This Society was founded by George Fox. Although it usually passes under the guise of Christianity, it bears little or no resemblance to it. There is no central authority, no priests or ministers, no dogma, no tradition, and no ritual. Friends just gather together and sit in silence until one of them feels moved by the Holy Spirit to speak. It was in this Society that Chambers' anguished search for God's worship ended.

What Chambers regards as mysticism is not the mysticism of Catholicism. There is a desire, a natural desire, in the human soul which inclines it towards intimate union with the Divinity. While the soul has the capacity to reach God, it does not have the ability to do so except by analogical knowledge. True mysticism, that is the Catholic view of mysticism, involves God intimately present to the created mind, and the mind aided by special graces, contemplates with tremendous joy, the Divine essence. This union is possible only because God so desires it. Human reason alone can never reach this state without the grace of God.

What Chambers calls mysticism is simply the natural inclination of the mind towards mysticism. In the past this misguided notion of mysticism has led men to dreams of direct contemplation and possession of God. Before long they viewed all experience as part of the Absolute and ended up with Pantheism. Perhaps Chambers will never go that far, but the possibility is present.

There is among Quakers much earnest and humble worship of God. They accomplish much in the way of good works and they have many natural virtues and undoubtedly God sheds His graces on them for no good people are excluded

from His love. However, it is hard to see how they can be anything more than their title of "Friends" implies. If this is where he believes he has found happiness and true worship of God one can scarcely quarrel with him, but for a man with his profound knowledge and keen mind, it is to be hoped that this weary traveller will find his way to the true church, the Roman Catholic Church, where he will discover the means to real contemplation and mysticism and he will also discover Christ.

"It (Hiss Case) was a struggle between the forces of two irreconcilable faiths—Communism and Christianity— . . ." Chambers deals at length with descriptions of the Communist faith but just what his concept of Christianity is and his meaning of faith, are never made quite clear. It would seem that what he considers as Christianity is not the commonly held notion for he is a member of a Sect that is so far from the center of Christianity (Catholic Church) as to hardly merit the title of being called Christian. Also, since Christianity involves a utilization of Christ in some way, it is hard to see, since he seemingly abandons Him, how Chambers can speak of Christianity and still give it some sort of a meaning.

In one place he gives his view of the Christian faith but while the language is inspiring and clever, he does not seem to say just what it is. "Christian faith is a paradox which is the sum of paradoxes. Its passion mounts, like a surge of music, insubstantial and sustaining, between two great cries of the spirit—the paradoxical sadness of 'Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief' and the paradoxical triumph of Tertullian's 'Credo quia impossibile . . . epitomized in the paradox of Solon weeping for his dead son. 'Why do you weep' asked a

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friend, 'since it cannot help?' Said Solon: 'That is why I weep—because it cannot help.' ”

Faith apparently is deep belief to Chambers but the criterion of faith is only whether one is willing to die for a faith or not. Communistic faith is strong because believers are willing to die for it. This criterion is not always valid because there is always some sort of outlandish faith that men are willing to die for. The fact that men are willing to die for a faith gives testimony to its power but not always to its wisdom. For a faith to be practical and useful it must be an actual faith that can guide a man's life down productive and decent paths. This sort of faith Chambers does not offer his readers because he does not have it himself. His faith in God is commendable, and he rightly claims that without belief in God society lacks character and meaning in its destiny. But, in order to make any sort of progress, man must have guides to keep him directed to his goal and that goal is God, not as some unknowable Absolute, but God in the Beatific Vision. Faith is a great aid in this journey, but so also is the intellect. Because the intellect sees and because it can understand being, it can understand about God not, of course, clearly, but enough to help buttress his faith. Over and above this is, of course, revelation.

Of what use is this huge book? *Time* called it “the best book on Communism ever written on this continent.” Perhaps it is that. It is a deep and penetrating look at modern man but while his diagnosis is correct his solution, at least to Catholics is superficial. The battle that is now joined is one between Christianity and the godless ones, Communists, but Chambers' notion of Christianity is so vague as to admit of various interpretations. He has an idea of freedom, but of free will he says nothing. As noted before, his total disregard

of the Catholic Church, for what motives I know not, has left a gaping void in the book.

To Chambers, only the ex-Communists can effectively combat Communism. "For no other has seen so deeply into the total nature of the evil with which Communism threatens mankind." He quotes with approval Ignazio Silone's words, "the final conflict will be between the Communists and the ex-Communists." While it is true that a practitioner of evil has a better knowledge of evil, it is not necessary for this to be so. The Catholic Church had condemned Communism long before Chambers even saw the light of day because of the evil which it saw in it.

Chambers has given the world a good book. He has written his chronicle with high intelligence and deep insight. Perhaps that is why some of his critics have been so ferocious. One reviewer in the grips of profound stupidity, called it a "long work of fiction." Another believes that Chambers is withholding vital information in the Hiss affair. Personal attacks on him have been many. However, of his sincerity there can be no doubt.

One may disagree over Chambers' theological and political ideas, as I have done, but "Witness" has a basic greatness which must be recognized. It is a moving and gripping account of a man who had come face to face with evil and had the courage to turn from it. He has given an accurate picture of the tragedy of present day life. Above all, he has shown, although not too clearly at times, that it is man's mind and spirituality that decay first, then his culture begins to rot.

John Surratt and the April Fourteenth Conspiracy

By PHIL GRIFFIN '54

THE nervous little man watched big John Surratt and squirmed in his chair.

"Come away from that window, John. What can you find so interesting out there in all that rain. Such weather! John, come away from that window, will you."

Surratt turned slowly, disgustedly. He was a tall, strikingly handsome young man, not given to excessive emotion, utterly fearless, yet cool and comprehending. "Oh shut up for a while, Atzerodt. You're always worrying about something, always fretting like a confounded woman. Why'd you join in with us, if you're so blasted afraid of your own shadow? I've got enough troubles without you hopping around under my nose like a frightened sparrow."

He turned to the window again, his hands jammed in his pockets, and turned his gaze unseeing to the street where a violent cloudburst held forth, unchallenged by any mere mortal. Surratt was troubled again. It seemed that trouble had dogged him ever since he quit the seminary to help the Cause some months back when things looked somewhat better than they do now. Things weren't at all good at the moment. The Cause was suffering severe blows, and a level-headed gentleman like himself realized that the end was in sight if something didn't turn up. That's why he was here, waiting for the chief to come back; that's why he had quit acting as a secret courier and had come back to his mother's boarding house with such a motley crew. Something had to be done, and it had to be done in a hurry.

But even here at home things weren't right. Oh, it was good to be with his mother Mary again, but that stupid sister of his, Anna, had complicated the situation incredibly with her silly infatuation for the Actor. He was a handsome devil, all right, and right handy around the ladies, but that was the trouble. He was too flip, too much of a heartbreaker to be good for anybody's sister, let alone his. Besides, unless he was mistaken, the Actor wasn't quite sane. He was too blasted hairbrained, too radical, even for a true lover of the Cause. But, you couldn't tell Anna, not that little fool. Everything had gone wrong for him ever since he had told the good Fathers that the priesthood wasn't for him.

"Where the devil's the Actor? He should have been back by now."

"Now who's nervous, Johnny, now who's nervous?"

"If you don't shut up, you little rodent, you won't have any cause for any more frittering. I'll see to that!"

The little man left the room rather hurriedly, mumbling exclamations at "that mad man," and ducked up the stairs before he became physically violent. Mr. Atzerodt abhorred violence, especially when it was directed at himself.

Left alone in the large room, young Surratt couldn't stand still. He paced the floor, stopping now and then at the window to curse rather vehemently before returning once more to the aimless circuit of the room.

"ANNA! Confound it, Anna, come in here."

The young girl appeared in the doorway, frightened of her brother, the same brother who was once so lighthearted, but now was continually finding fault with everything and anything.

"Where's Ma?"

"She's gone to church, Johnny. She . . ."

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“Why didn’t you go with her: A little praying wouldn’t hurt you either, you know.”

“I thought . . .”

“You stopped thinking when he came into the house. Well, you’d better not be here when he gets back, or I’ll make you regret it.”

Outwardly cowed, but inwardly rebellious, Anna left the room like the obedient sister she should have been and returned to the kitchen, but not before the front door opened, and he came in, not any the less dashing because his cape was soaked and his clothes soggy.

“Ah, my fair Anna. And how is the flower of this dismal den today? Speak up, girl. Don’t . . .”

“Leave her alone and get in here.” Johnny towered there in the doorway. Anna scurried into the kitchen.

The man in the hall was only slightly annoyed as he brushed the water from his hair before stepping into the parlor.

“My good Mr. Surratt. You seem to forget that it is I who commands this expedition; that it was I who organized it; that it was I who drafted the plan we are to follow.”

“And you forget, dear sir, that I told you that your plan may burn in the farthest part of Hades before I’ll follow it. Unless you’ve come to your senses, you shall lose my allegiance. Make no mistake about it.”

Johnny was furious. He turned from the man and walked to the window where he concentrated furiously on some unseen, and perhaps non-existent, object out in the never ending rain. Plan indeed! Of all the stupid schemes . . .

“Once more, John, for your benefit, although I can’t see for the life of me why you persist in this belligerent atti-

tude, I'll rehearse our little masterpiece . . . You must remember that the rest of our fair band is in complete accord with my idea."

"Fair band! Idiots, morons and hero worshippers to the last man. And cowards to boot! Well, I'm no hero worshipper, you can bet your last press clipping on that. You always were a rotten actor, and you're a worse strategist. Count me out unless you've hit on something new."

The fellow was losing some of his composure now. Surratt was too good an operative to lose over something so trivial as a plan of attack. He was the one jewel in a handful of worthless baubles. Any fool could see that. Oh well, he'd make one more try.

"My dear John . . ."

"Don't 'Dear John' me, you faker."

"Very well, then. Have it your own way, Mr. Surratt. It was announced today that our quarry will appear at the very theater that I'd prayed he'd attend. I know it like a book. I know the play being presented better than the author himself. The situation is made to order for our coup. The fates have been kind to us, Johnny."

"So, you still think you're going to walk into that theater and walk out with him tucked under your arm. Come to your senses, man! It's impossible! Kidnap, yes, but not under the eyes of hundreds. What about the guards? Have you thought of them?"

"Guard, John, not guards. That drunken sot, Parker, is to stand watch. The temptation of the grape and the grain prove too much for him, unless I miss my guess. Before the first act is finished, he'll have found his way to some bar and left the box unguarded."

"But, you seem to forget that he's a big man. You

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can't seem to get it through your head that even if he is subdued, he'll be a terrific burden to carry out."

"That, my good man, is why we have Paine listed among us. Do you know a man living that Paine could not handle like a child?"

"Paine! A moron at best!"

"True, but ideal for our purpose."

"You'll need money for an escape. Everything you owned has been sold already. How do you intend to account for that angle?"

"John, John, you distress me greatly. We'll send someone post haste to the paymaster in that fair land to the north, who has been stationed there for such purposes. Now that we have a concrete plan to offer him, I'll guarantee his generosity."

"But, whom will you send? Paine? He'd get lost five miles from here. Atzerodt? That little worm would be too frightened to venture that far into enemy territory. Herold? A boy on a man's errand. Who? Who?"

"I'll think about it."

The solution had come with incredible swiftness. Johnny thought how he could bow out with ease now under the guise of heading north for funds to finance the escape. It was simple: head north, then get lost. Don't come back. Stay away until that idiot was killed or captured, then return to fight again for the Cause. Johnny uttered a silent prayer of thanks, then called for the Actor.

"I'll go. Give me a good horse and the right connections, and I'll be back with the money in due time, and in plenty of time to help with the kidnapping."

"Why the sudden change of heart?"

Johnny shrugged; "No reason. Do I need one?"

The Actor brightened considerably; his last obstacle had been hurdled. "No, not at all. God speed to you."

So, Johnny Surratt left his mother's boarding house, never to return. Therein lies our story, the story of young Johnny Surratt, a devotee of the Cause. But what of the Actor and the rest of his confederates? Oh, they went through with an alternate plan without young Surratt's presence. April the fourteenth it was when the Actor, John Wilkes Booth he signed his name, stepped into box 8 of Ford's Theater and shot Abraham Lincoln. April the fourteenth it was when Paine, which was an alias for Powell, the moron, left five badly wounded men behind him at Secretary of State Seward's house, the Secretary included, although he later recovered, bearing scars that were to remain with him for the rest of his life. April the fourteenth it was when Atzerodt, the coward, backed out of his end of the deal by failing to assassinate Vice President Johnson. April the fourteenth it was when the whole country was thrown into turmoil by the actor and his crew.

But it was later that the staunch follower of the Cause, the Confederacy, John Surratt, heard the news. It was later that his mother, Mary, became the first woman in the U. S. to be executed for high treason. It was later that Anna Surratt took down lithograph on the wall of her room.

As she stood there tearfully studying the picture, the lithograph fell to the floor. On the back was the inscription:

"Sic Semper Tyrannis!"

The last dramatic line of an insane actor.

Father Raymond Bruckberger, O.P.

By RICHARD F. MURPHY '56

SOMEONE once said, "War makes the weak, weaker and the strong, stronger." This statement was proclaimed and intended for nations on an international level, and for the subjects of these nations as a group. But it is nonetheless true, at times more true, when spoken in relation to the individual.

The downfall of the weak is a simple uncontrollable process. He faces hardship and terror and he can not bear to look, his fear arises and he is smothered, he degrades himself with shame, and, most difficult of all, he knows himself a coward.

For the strong the trail is long, steep and tedious, a contest of an enduring struggle between mental objective and physical capability. But defeat, the lost cause, or surrender are never his. For him there is always a way to fight. His integrity binds him to his goal and he is its slave till his award is death or victory claims him.

It is indeed incongruous but nonetheless a fact that the robed person who ministers God's Sacraments is many times thought of as Father "So and So," a priest. And there it stops. It is forgotten that beneath the robes of office there is a man. Father Raymond Leopold Bruckberger O. P. is such a man. He is a strong man.

The ancient volcanoes of Murat, France, gazed down at the miracle of birth on April 10, 1907, when a son was

brought forth from the fine and humble Bruckberger family. His early days of trial and error were arduous but Father sums them in his typical manner, "My youth was hard, but I was afraid of nothing." It did not take long for him to settle on a worldly goal and in his childhood the desire to become a priest was born, nourished and cherished, and the confidence of his decision has been its fulfillment. When seventeen he crossed the threshold of the seminary to begin his studies.

As is the custom in most European countries, a male, when he becomes of age, is required to serve two years with the military. Raymond, a healthy young Frenchman, was no exception and his studies were necessarily laid aside to comply with this obligation of the country he was to prove he loved so dearly.

With his release from the Army he sought counsel with friends for reassurance of his next planned step. This was to apply for, and receive, permission to join the Dominican Order. The next seven years he devoted himself to the study of theology and philosophy.

The ominous clouds had long been gathering on the horizon and now the storm had arrived.

During the late 1930's the world was bathed in blood, sweat and tears. Europe and Asia were erupting fear, hatred and death to both themselves and the far flung corners of the universe. As by a giant magnet, Western civilization was slowly drawn into the maws of the colossus Thor. In the United States, an unparalleled incident in her history, a peacetime draft, was rumored and debated, fought for and fought against, and was finally made a fact.

The early 1940's brought the catastrophe of global war, and in Europe, Fascism had swept toward the border of France, and the power of the Supreme Being had set the stage

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whereby His disciple might fulfill a destiny unthought of in a youth whose paramount desire was to become a priest.

With the advent of war came a recall to military service for Father Bruckberger. The gravity of the situation in France led Pope Pius to issue an edict that gave dispensation from ecclesiastical law to all French priests. Thus liberated the dominant fighting spirit of Father inspired him to enlist in the French Commandos. He served honorably and well, fighting with the cunning and abandon of the professional soldier. His relations with death caused him to feel "death a subtle and marvelous climax." He, himself, was twice seriously wounded. He was captured by the Germans when his country lay prostrate before the unending tide of hobnailed, goose-stepping boots. He feels France was betrayed by her well behaved children and saved by her "enfant terrible."

Upon his escape this gun-toting Dominican, his spirit bent by defeat, sprang back to the fray by joining the Resistance Movement. These activities were dimmed when once again he was captured and this time incarcerated for four months in a Gestapo prison. Released he returned to the Resistance and eventually became Head Chaplain. In this capacity he arranged the reception for General De Gaule at the Cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris. The buzzing of German bullets, ricocheting from the walls, deterred not a bit the happiness of the day. For his gallantry in war he has been awarded the Croix de Guerre.

Father Bruckberger is as handy with a typewriter as a machine gun. A book of his war exploits, *One Sky To Share*, has joined his other published works. The experiences of a priest as a combatant, the conflicts of his status, the reasoning and thought behind his actions, weave a most intriguing tale. He writes passionately of his France "convulsed in

anguish," betrayed and defeated, and of the patriots who try to help her.

It is said that a man in his writings unconsciously reflects his way of life, his hidden thoughts, his inner desires. Father is revealed to be a cultured, contemplative man, outspoken and forthright, convinced and firm in defense of his beliefs. As artful as a master of the rapier is he in his choice of thoughts and method of expression. He writes with crisp, thought-provoking phrases of striking magnitude. His evaluations and conclusions leave little room for doubt.

Shortly after the war Father came to the United States. From his personal diary, comprising his thoughts and feelings of this country, her people, and their faith comes the second-half of *One Sky To Share*. These sincere, deeply moving passages bring to light the humanitarian in him. It is those who spring from foreign soil who best tell us of our native glories, and this profound man gives us a notable account of our wonders and his great admiration of these United States.

At present the Dominican Priory of Saint Peter Martyr in Winona, Minnesota, is home for Father Bruckberger. And now with the days of havoc behind him, this scholar, author, and warrior has returned to his life's goal, to be a man of God.

Three Modern Systems

By HENRY P. GRIFFIN '54

WITH the appearance on the philosophical horizon of such distinguished contemporary thinkers as Jacques Maritain and Etienne Gilson, New-Scholasticism (which may be briefly defined as the application of Scholastic principles to the problems of the modern world) began to rise to prominence. Meanwhile, a number of other philosophical systems also began to attract attention. Under the aegis of the Soviet Union, Marxist Communism has come to the forefront as the enemy of religion and the free society. The pragmatic philosophies of Willian James and John Dewey have recruited many adherents during the last fifty years, especially in the United States; Henri Bergson's theory of evolution has assumed popularity in this largely mechanistic twentieth century; the logical positivism of Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead has achieved a distinct appeal to those who restrict reality solely to its quantified aspects; and the existentialist doctrine of universal pessimism has found support everywhere, but especially in European nations.

These systems bear little or no resemblance to the traditional Thomistic viewpoint, but they are important because of the influence they have exercised and are exercising over the modern mind. The purpose of this article is to point out the major differences between some of these twentieth century conceptions and those of traditional philosophy. Un-

fortunately, because of space limitations, all of these aforementioned systems cannot be discussed. Marxism, pragmatism, and existentialism have been included because of their cardinal importance in today's world.

Although Karl Marx does not properly belong in a discussion of twentieth century philosophy (his dates are 1818-1883), he has probably exerted more influence on our world from a social and political viewpoint than any other man. This influence was crystallized in the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. Marx was a materialist in every sense of the word. He held that reality, all reality, can be described as "matter in motion." Consequently, he rejected all non-materialistic interpretations of being. In particular was theology to be discarded, since it was both useless and even pernicious. Metaphysics also received the dialectical hatchet treatment. Thinking, according to Marx, was an adaptation of the human mind to the motion of the physical universe. Abstract ideas, per se, did not exist.

Proceeding from this starting point, he adopted the Hegelian thesis-antithesis-synthesis triad and gave it a social twist. Hegel thought that reality was a world process into which everything would be incorporated in one grand synthesis. Transposing this theory to fit his own views, Marx came up with the following conclusion, which is the core of the Marxist dialectical materialism: thesis—wealth in the hands of a few; antithesis—wealth in the hands of the many; synthesis—the classless society.

Holding the opinion that private property (thesis) is the root of all the world's ills, Marx therefore advocated that all private wealth be placed in the hands of "the people." This cannot be accomplished by peaceful means, however, because of the stupidity and greediness of the "petty bour-

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geoisie," who control this wealth. Consequently, the only remaining alternative is to take it from them by force, by revolution. But this revolution (the antithesis) is a negative, destructive process; and Marx was a proponent of progress.

After all wealth has been distributed, the way is then paved for the appearance of the classless society (the great synthesis). It will take time, he admits (after thirty-five years, we are still waiting for some manifestation of it in Soviet Russia), but when it occurs, all evils will disappear. In this utopia, all will be working in union, and no one will feel dissatisfied with his lot because everyone else will be in the same boat. A concerted effort for material betterment will transfigure humanity. Marx, unlike Hegel, who stressed the individual at the expense of society, held that the individual was merely an instrument for the self-realization of society. Thus it is seen why the communists place so much emphasis upon the absolute power of the state. It is the *raison d'être* of the individual. Outside of it, he is nothing.

Karl Marx harbored in his soul a real hatred for all religion in general, and for Christianity in particular. To his way of thinking, Christianity must be totally destroyed before men can be happy. It taught that the spiritual world was higher than the material; he said that the only existence is physical existence. It sanctioned the right to own private property; he regarded private property as a cardinal evil. It told us that God was our Creator and final cause; he insisted that society was the be-all and end-all. The all too familiar "opiate of the masses" charge stems directly from this antipathy.

* * * * *

Because of the popularity which their ideas have gained, two men are especially important in a consideration

of twentieth century American philosophy. These two men are Willian James and John Dewey. The philosophy to which they adhere is called "pragmatism" (Dewey refers to it as "instrumentalism").

The pragmatists, overemphasizing the subjective element, claim that reality is sense experience. James elaborates upon this point by going on to say that the content of human consciousness is whole and entire, and that sense data are not abstracted from bits but constitute one continuous whole, without spatial or temporal divisions. From our own sense knowledge, however, we conceive of physical objects as distinct and separate. But if they are really not (and are continuous, as James says) then our senses are deceiving us. But if this is so, James cannot equate reality with experience unless he defines reality as "something which does not seem to be what it is," or experience as "that which we experience it to be." The latter appears to be the more appropriate solution for James. Henri Bergson, by the way, actually does define experience in this manner.

Here again, however, we run into difficulties. If reality is experience and experience is what we experience it to be, then such things as hallucinations (or what we ordinary mortals who believe in objective reality call hallucinations) are perfectly valid. The man in the strait-jacket who holds daily conversations with Alexander the Great, actually ought not to be locked up at all, since he is not mad but is only experiencing a different experience. And in the "land of the free" we all believe in differences, don't we?

A further amplification of the reality — experience tenet is made by James in his selectivity theory. The consciousness displays attention in certain directions, so that experience is volitional as well as sensory. A belief in God is

Three Modern Systems

thereby justified by James on the grounds that such a belief satisfies our longings and desires, even though it cannot be directly corroborated by sense experience. The Jamesian "God," however, is a rather emaciated personage, no better than we are, who fights along with us for the salvation of the universe. Pure chance, which can disrupt both the plans of God and men, is the common enemy.

John Dewey, by throwing spiritual realities out altogether, takes a somewhat more practical stand. He holds that each and every situation must be decided on its own merits. There are no hard and fast rules for dealing with problems, and therefore, there are no universal truths. Dewey's notion of "learning by doing" has had a great influence on the American secular educational system. As can be readily seen, the James pragmatism is in accord with the American business mind, which predicates goodness largely on success.

The philosophy which goes by the name of existentialism was founded by the nineteenth century Danish philosopher and theologian, Soren Kierkegaard. Of course, to resort to a truism, it can be traced much farther back than that. Much of the existentialist dialectic resembles the teachings of the old Greek and Roman Stoics. It also has a good deal in common with Marxism. In many other respects, however, it is distinctively modern.

The existentialist movement is presently basking in widespread approval throughout a large portion of continental Europe, especially France. Its incredibly rapid ascendancy in European intellectual circles is dated only from the conclusion of the Second World War. Prior to the war, it had virtually no disciples at all, but today thousands of people call themselves existentialists. The acknowledged leader of the movement is one Jean-Paul Sartre, who is perhaps better

The Alembic

known in this century for his novels and plays than for his philosophical associations, although this fiction is definitely existentialist in content.

The philosophy of existentialism, as has been said before, is a philosophy of universal despair. Sartre has defined its basic theme in the one sentence: "I exist, that is all, and I find it sickening." He then proceeds to state: "Man can . . . count on no one but himself . . . he is alone, abandoned on earth, with no other aim than the one he sets for himself, with no other destiny than the one he forges for himself on earth."

Holding this defeatist opinion as they do, it is difficult to see why they all haven't already leaped into the Seine or taken headers from the top of the Eiffel Tower or otherwise embraced measures to put an end to this "nauseating" business of living.

They additionally hold that, there being no God, man is the sole judge of his actions; and that the very existence of the individual is ridiculous, the only justification being that he confirms the existence of other men. This is very similar to the Marxian doctrine of absolute statism.

Actually, existentialism is not a philosophical system at all. It is, rather, a philosophical attitude springing from the tidal wave of pessimism which has engulfed Europe in the wake of two world wars and the threat of a third.

VERSE

By JOSEPH D. GOMES, '53

Appreciation

Appreciation makes the heart glow warm,
It gives men something they can't buy,
Use it and you do no harm,
Instead you gain some loyalty.
For true devotion to your cause,
A little something you may give,
A loyal hound there never was,
Like man, with a new desire to live.

Teaching

Sometimes it takes a fit to teach
Those who are farthest from a thought,
They are the hardest ones to reach,
They are not willing to be taught.
Yet they are human like the rest,
They strive to equal someone, too;
To them we must always give our best,
So they may see life as we do.

Sheila-Lee

“Now look here, Bob,” says I to him,
“It’s you alone must sink or swim.
You know your mind, it holds the key,
So why discuss this gal with me,
You know your chance is slim.”

“Of course, you’re right, Joe,
I’m outclassed;
Her hopes are really unsurpassed,
A college senior such as I
Can only pay for ham on rye.
I guess I’ll go get gassed.”

A Matter of Fact

You should watch that lad from college,
He has brains and he has knowledge,
His ideas just cannot fail,
You point out faults to no avail,
The facts are there, he has them all,
No one can change them, big or small,
This ideal state he’s living in
Is cause for other men to grin;
They know adjustments he must make,
Concessions he must give and take,
And though he’ll gain his point someday,
There will be detours on the way,
And life’s cold facts will soon replace,
The facts of knowledge without trace.

