

BOOK SHELF

The Human Soul

By Sister Margaret Teresa Nazareth College

THE HUMAN SOUL, by Dom Anscar Vonier, O.S.B. Herder, 1913. 368 pp. Priceless.

Not a new book; not an old book either, as books on theology and philosophy go — but a book with quiet morning freshness, waiting to be studied. When you want to know what you are rather than who you are, go to Vonier.

When you honestly need to know your relation to God, to your guardian angel, to your own spirit that hour when it will free itself from the body to "fly to heaven without defense" — when it is time for an understanding of your own will-power and its remarkable freedom, its ability to resist any compulsion — then in Vonier, THE HUMAN SOUL AND ITS RELATIONS WITH OTHER SPIRITS, you will find a quick, clear, refreshing answer suited to "the educated lay mind" and yet couched in strict scholastic terms.

MORE THAN that: besides being given the answer, you will be taught it. You will see how it is arrived at, and your suave, deft, purely honest guide will lead you around the top edge of the quarry for a fine view without letting you fall in.

You can get down below to examine particular strata, he will hint in other books than this. But for now, seeing clearly, not closely — march on! (This method is somewhat like the teaching method, observable in every life, of the Master — and I don't mean Vonier's "Masters," Cajetan and Thomas, nor the Master-Teacher Who Knows, but the Master-Teacher Who shapes all the events and circumstances. He puts us in.)

Dom Anscar Vonier, who died in '38, was himself a man "for the morning," a German who came over to England as Abbot of Buckfast when the pre-Reformation abbey lay in the ruins to which Henry VIII had reduced it, took to himself the very soul of English Benedictinism, became an architect and a builder, and with his monks rebuilt the abbey.

HE STARTED with St. Father Hoehn tells us, and with one stonemason among his monks and the blessed obedience of all of them, he persevered, so that English Catholics can now boast even further than the days of King Canute, back to St. Peter himself. (No, I don't know him either, but I shall try Atwater-Bulter, Bede, and The Golden Legend.)

BUT THE HUMAN SOUL, cornerstone of his equally characteristic Benedictine edifice of books: Besides theology, it contains sudden prose poems, in celebration of the rightness of the Catholic position intellectually; a phrasing always clear-cut, careful, yet never mincing; that unmistakable authority of a great teacher; and a fine irresistible (though disclaimed) junction and delectation-power.

And a fifth excellence: when he gets through, he stops, as if the Great Silence had arrived, as if tropical darkness had fallen, as if the teacher knew he had put just enough of vastness into just the few brave words with backbone enough to hold it that poor Average Reader could take in. All the chapters are mercifully short.

Well, a sixth excellence, quite cheery: a way of saying that or that point is very difficult, impossible to grasp, and then letting you grasp it.

SOME GREAT chapters: Soul and Spirit, The Body's Share in Spiritual Life, Mortification: Finest of all, Law and Prayer.

To quote: "Catholicity is the most spiritual religion in the world, and Catholicity has never found it necessary to condemn the body. To speak of spiritual life as the life that does not take count of the body, if anything, is meant by such a phrase, is the direct contradiction of traditional Catholic spirituality."

"Mortification is the assertion of the body, not its negation."

"When prayer is heard, the infinitely rich has not assimilated the infinitely poor, but He has made him less poor."

Trust is a difficult thing amongst men, and it is not less difficult between man and God. But where it is found, there is union far more refreshing than the assimilation dreamed of by the Pantheist... Prayer is one of the great laws of the human soul; nothing could take its place... and the soul without prayer is outside one of the loveliest planes of moral perfection, the plane where trust and Divine liberality meet."

When St. Finian obtained in Rome the first copy of St. Jerome's psalter to reach Ireland, St. Columba borrowed the book and made a copy for his own use. St. Finian laid claim to the transcript. St. Columba refused to give it up and the case was tried by King Diarmid, overlord of Ireland.

THE DECISION went against St. Columba. "To every cow her calf," said the judge, "and to every book its son-book. Therefore the copy which you have made, Columba, belongs to Finian."

In his talk in the House of Commons Mr. Hyde said: "That was a wise and far-seeing judgment, which is really the basis of the international law on the subject today. As a result of that action the unauthorized copy made by St. Columba was subsequently imported into Scotland and this I understand, brought about the conversion of the Scots to the Christian Faith."

ST. COLUMBA, the most famous of Scottish saints, was actually an Irishman. He was born about the year 521 at Gartain in County Donegal. He later became abbot of Iona. St. Finian was born in the neighborhood of Strangford Lough in Ireland. He became a bishop and is said to have died in 579.



'Freedom Crusade' Letters To Red China

Fremont, Ohio — (NC) — Air mail (25c) letters addressed to Chairman Mao Tse-Tung, Peking, China, are put into the mail by students of St. Joseph High School, here, who are among tens of thousands of American students, housewives, laborers and businessmen of all faiths who are joining the "Freedom Crusade." Conceived "in those dreadful prisons in China" by Father Harold W. Rigney of the Divine Word Missionaries who recently was freed from Red China, the crusade is a nationwide letter writing campaign to Mao petitioning immediate fulfillment of his 1955 promise to release 15 Americans still in Red Chinese jails.

Priest Bible Scholar Once Texas Baptist

St. Louis — (NC) — A one time Texas Baptist who became a priest is now in Rome to complete 20 consecutive years of study for what is considered the most difficult of all degrees — the doctorate in Sacred Scripture.

FATHER BRUCE Vawter, Vincentian priest, had been teaching Sacred Scriptures to students for the priesthood at Kenrick Seminary here. He wrote a series, "Understanding Your Bible" for the St. Louis Register, archdiocesan newspaper, during the last two years, and portions of the series are to be published this fall by Sheed and Ward.

It is reported that there are not more than a half dozen priests in the United States who have the doctorate in Sacred Scripture. One reason is the prodigious amount of study the degree requires.

THE SCHOLAR, in addition to thorough grounding in theology and languages, must also be student of archeology, ecclesiastical history, writings of early Church Fathers, geography and the scriptures.

Candidates must have a thorough knowledge of at least 10 languages — ancient Sanscrit, Aramaic and Hebrew, so they can decipher original texts; Latin, Greek, French, German and Arabic, so they can read early manuscripts or the many commentaries written on them in other languages down through the ages.

Moreover, he spoke on subjects that ranged from business to athletics and to audiences ranging from heads of state to art exhibitors.

Public School Uses Parochial School

Pequanook, N. J. — (RNS) — Public school sessions will be conducted in three classrooms of a Catholic parochial school here next Fall.

The Rev. John Dericks, pastor of Holy Spirit church, donated the use of the classrooms to the Township of Pequanook.

French Shrine City Enlarges Airport

London — (NC) — The first recorded action for an infringement of copyright took place in Ireland in the sixteenth century between two monks who later became saints, it was reported in the House of Commons here.

Montgomery Hyde, Ulster Unionist from Belfast, in a debate on proposed copyright laws said that the two principals in the case were St. Columba (Columille) and St. Finian of Moville.

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Clergy Still Held In Red Internment

Berlin — (NC) — Information received here concerning the release of prisoners held in concentration camps in the Soviet Union made no mention of the Catholic priests and prelates who are imprisoned in the USSR.

The imprisoned clergymen may be set free if the Moscow government keeps its word that it will abolish all internment camps in the Soviet Union within a year to 18 months.

THE PRELATES now being held in the Soviet Union are the following:

Archbishop Joseph Slipy of Lviv (Lvov) and Auxiliary Bishop Nicola Budka of Lviv; Bishop Nicholas Charnetzky, Apostolic Visitor for Ukrainians in Poland; Bishop Vincent Bonvolontus of Telsai, Lithuania; Auxiliary Bishop Francis Ramanauskas of Telsai, Lithuania; Msgr. Peter Verhug, Apostolic Visitor for Ukrainians in Germany; Msgr. August Baumrog, Apostolic Administrator of the Volga; Msgr. John Roth, Apostolic Administrator of the Caucasus.

Other West German cities already have made gifts to the church, which is dedicated to Our Lady of the Assumption. It is located eight blocks from the center of the atomic blast which wrecked Hiroshima.

Cologne donated an organ. Bonn a tabernacle. Dusseldorf one of the doors, and Aachen the baptismal font. The Bochumer Verein, one of West Germany's largest steel mills, gave four "peace" bells.

German Cities Aid Hiroshima Church

Washington — (NC) — "Many people think of the Holy Father as talking only in Latin or Italian and only on ecclesiastical subjects," which is far from true, according to John O'Neill, editor of the quarterly magazine "The Pope Speaks," which is published here.

The current summer issue of "The Pope Speaks" contains not only the encyclical on Sacred Music and the Holy Father's addresses to priests on the requirements of their vocation, but also his talks and letters on sports, business, human relations in industry, the study of law, natural childbirth, the education of children and of special interest to writers and publishers, his address on "Truth, Charity and Critique," and his "Norms for the Translator."

2,000 Catechists Ready For 30,000 Students

Los Angeles — (NC) — Two thousand catechists, 1,000 of them lay men and women, are ready to begin instruction of 30,000 children in religious vacation schools throughout this 9,467-square-mile archdiocese.

Msgr. John K. Clarke, director of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine here, held a final briefing for the catechists as regular school classes closed.

During the past 10 years, the Confraternity here has developed an intense program of recruitment and training of lay catechists to cope with the enormous southern California population increase.

Some of the catechists, Msgr. Clarke said, underwent a 30-week training course to equip them to teach high school age students.

Catechists training centers are conducted by the Confraternity in each of the four counties of this archdiocese.

French Shrine City Enlarges Airport

London — (NC) — Next year the airport here will be able to receive large passenger planes. Alterations will lengthen the air strip and increase the facilities for operations.

This work is being undertaken because large numbers of pilgrims are expected to take part in the great religious festival to be held here in 1957 and particularly in 1958, the centenary of the apparition of Our Lady.

Return Of Jesuits To Norway Seen

New York — (NC) — Well-grounded hopes that the Jesuits will soon be legally readmitted to Norway were voiced here by Bishop James Mangors S.M., of Oslo, the first Catholic bishop from Norway ever to visit the United States.

Among reasons for the Bishop's optimism, it is understood, are King Haakon's personal dislike of the ban, and the fact that, of the seven Lutheran bishops of Norway, six have indicated that they would be glad to see it abolished.

Bishop Mangors was knighted by King Haakon for his heroic stand during the Nazi occupation of Norway.

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Hospital Gets \$150,000 Gift
Milwaukee — (NC) — A \$150,000 gift to the St. Mary's Hospital building fund here, has been received. It was donated by the Allis-Chalmers Manufacturing Co. St. Mary's is administered by the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul.

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