

Christos Yannaras, *Ὁρθοδοξία καὶ Δύση. Ἡ Θεολογία στὴν Ἑλλάδα σήμερα* (= Orthodoxy and the West. Theology in Greece today), Athens 1972, pp. 173. [Series «Σύνορος», N° 5],

When critical opinions about the spiritual essence of modern Greek theological issues are examined by the very exponents of essential views with boldness and with a great feeling of responsibility, unquestionably our experience and sensitivity both gain in quality and are renewed. This is so because it is extremely important not to lose sight of the fact that with the great and disputed matters, the morally sound position is not only and is not always the fear of a possible failure and a preference for silence, but the readiness for re-estimation at any moment and for a reorganisation of the paths within which we organise ourselves before the latter become, to a dangerous degree, meaningless.

An acceptance of this precondition will enable the reader to occupy himself attentively with the new book of Dr. Christos Yannaras. Apart from everything else the author is known by an already rich list of publications, and by cross reference we may recall here two of his books which not only are concerned with the field in which he is personally interested but show a firm orientation towards certain particular *positions* which are creatively developed and about which he elucidates: *Τὸ ὄντολογικὸν περιεχόμενον τῆς θεολογικῆς ἐννοίας τοῦ προσώπου* [The Ontological Content of the Theological Meaning of Personhood (1970)] and *Ἡ ἐλευθερία τοῦ ἥθους* [The Freedom of Ethos (1970)].

The essay «Orthodoxy and the West», (pp. 13-49: Introduction by the author which was communicated at the Second International Orthodox Theological Congress, Boston, September, 1970), summarizes in its pages a systematic comparison of two fundamental *life styles* which are outlined within the «special» frames of theological scope, and even at a wider level, from the meaning of the *West* (a definition of the Western religious mentality) and the meaning of *Orthodoxy* (a definition of the Eastern Christian tradition). Despite the necessary brevity which is given to a communication at a congress and with the opportunity which is offered in these circumstances to form an essay, the author attempts a comprehensive examination of the main points which characterise the problem connected with this enormous subject. Furthermore, he presents a cycle of personal opinions in which the solid data of the apportioned elements is cognate with the precision of the general thought behind them.

An analysis of the special characteristics which appear in the Western religious type lead the author to the following conclusions. The psychological structures upon which is founded the basis of modern European thought about the world and history can be attributed to the reason-bound theological scholasticism of the western middle ages which is the natural forerunner of later European rationalism. With the individualistic conception of ethical expediency and with the analytic rationalization of the relationship of man to God, there has gradually been formed a theoretical basis which consists chiefly of the following precepts, as summarised by Dr. Yannaras: «the priority of the intellectual elucidation of inspired truth—a separating line between the immaterial and the worldly - the sovereign will above physical and historical reality - the «ostracism» of God to the place of the empirically inaccessible—a separation of religion from life which is limited to creeds—the neutralization of Ontology, that is, of Dogmatics, from Ethics» (p. 25). And the most immediate expression of this religious evolution in contemporary western world is none other than *Technics*, the special *ethos* of which represents the suspension of the mystical-eucharistical relation of man to the world, and leads to the deepest ontological chasm in which is involved the entanglement of personhood within the complex of bodiless intellectualistic approximations. Thus, religious liturgy too declines to the level of conventional communal necessity, a situation which, in various ways, provokes the subconscious reaction of western communities and produces a

multitude of side-effects which are manifested daily in the field of artistic and socio-political research.

The possibility of a reply to the contemporary *perplexity* of the western world from the point of view of Orthodox theological tradition occupies the second part of the essay and reveals the positive stand of the author towards the problem. Using as his starting point the decisive contribution of diaspora Russian Orthodox theology towards this direction, the positions which represent the above possibility are summarized: «with the accentuation on apophatic - mystical character of Orthodox theology — in the conception of Ethics and practical devotion, which is represented by the ascetic «philokalian tradition — in the systematic formulation of the eucharistical structure of Ecclesiology — and in the worthy acknowledgment of the theology of Ikons» (p. 36). Thus appearing as a single solution is «the return to the eschatological selfconsciousness of Orthodoxy» (p. 47), which will become manifest within the liturgical hold of parochial communication: «From the liturgical unity of the faithful comes the impetus to change in communal gathering of persons, the authentic and not simply rationalistic basis of communal justice, the emancipation of work from the slavery to necessity, its transfiguration in personal and communal relation. Only parochial life can give even to-day the style of the sacerdotal character of politics, of the prophetic character of science, of the philanthropic character of economics, of the mystical character of love. Without the community all these are theories, naive idealism, emotional utopia. Within the community are historical realism, realistic possibility, dynamic revelation» (pp. 46-47).

The second part of the book is made up of a more particular historical consideration of the same problem as it appears in Greece. This extensive text with the title, «Theology in Greece Today» (pp. 53-173: a reply of the author to a research of the periodical *Istina*; see N° 2, 1971, pp. 131-150), examines the course of modern Greek theological conscience in the face of its official exponents. But here at the beginning should be the place to point out that the author's undoubtedly benevolent intentions are insufficient to justify the keenness of some expressions (see, for instance, the extreme cases in pp. 86-95 and 165-166), which one could in no way espouse.

The phenomenon of the turning of modern Greek thought towards western renaissance humanism without organic connection to the civilizing principles of Orthodox tradition, the gradual alteration of the character of Greek theology towards a form of «westernization» and the lamentable consequences of this alteration in wider areas of our spiritual life constitute the object of the investigation of Dr. Yannaras and also reveal his constant anguish. Historically, the starting point of the discussion is localized to the seventeenth century, more precisely to the second half of the sixteenth century (though its deeper roots belong to even earlier periods). It is concerned with the epoch which follows the famous Council of Trent (1545-1563), at which the decisions led the Holy See to an enormous outburst of missionary activity in the area of the eastern Mediterranean, with the aim of attracting new followers. The target of the activity of the Roman Catholics as well as that of the Protestant missionaries now become the «schismatic» Orthodox of the East, with the result that Greek Orthodoxy is exposed in a contest on two fronts in which it begins to use the weapons of its opponents in an attempt at legal defence of dogma and tradition. Thus a change of place occurs «the centre of its selfconscious from liturgical life and mystical experience to the declaration of ideological positions and articles of faith» (p. 58). From that time onwards with the appearance of academic theology within a University curriculum organized in accordance with the Western European prototypes, the evolution even till to-day followed its inevitable course. As characteristic stations, the author mentions the organic amputation of the Greek church from the living body of Byzantine tradition with the creation of its autocephalicity, and the appear-

ance of religious organisations aimed at directing community life along moral lines to the exclusion of the liturgical place of the church (pietistic movement).

Here, apart from the intimations of the above negative expressions, it is important for us to take notice of the somewhat isolated perhaps, yet solid indications of a spiritual renewal which is contributing to the territory of Orthodox theology. One primary, basic indication is to be found with the turn of the recent theological powers of the country towards the creative study of and worthy attention towards patristic tradition,⁴ centring upon the work of Gregory Palamas. In fact, it is possible to observe over the past years a general conscious attempt to combine harmoniously theological opinions with the roots of patristic tradition and patristic interrogation; an attempt which is taking shape in some meaningful works of new theologians as well as in collective productions. In relation to the latter, it is important to underline here the role of the «Patriarchal Institute of Patristic Studies» in Thessaloniki which, in co-operation with the Faculty of Theology there and with the publication of the scholarly periodical *Kleronomia* is cultivating the study of patristic subjects at a perceptibly progressed level (see pp. 147-168).

The presentation which advanced an aim had to refer, only by indication to the book's subject matter of dissensions wherein the interest exceeds to a considerable extent the meaning for the specialist reader. Certainly however, the necessarily confined limits for the technicality of the writing as submitted leaves the reader somehow with the opinion that there is a deficiency. This deficiency becomes even more perceptible when we accredit the existence of possibilities for more definite conclusions. In other words: the seriousness for modern Greek arbitrary problems which are touched upon by Dr. Yannaras and even the multiple presuppositions which he brings together for their confrontation, make it evident that in the future we must hope for a broader discussion of the subject. In particular, the second essay of the present volume can provide the draft for a decisive synthesis, which, with the help of historical perspective and systematic exploitation of the rich sources, will critically guide the course of modern Greek Orthodoxy and will ultimately define a mature and conscious appraisal against this limiting factor in Greek theology.

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Milan Djurcinov, *La Poésie Macédonienne. Anthologie des Origines à nos Jours*, French translation by J. Gaucheron, Guillevic et L. Albertoni in cooperation with Kl. Grupčeva and Vl. Urošević, Prologue by J. Rousselot, Paris, Les éditeurs français réunis, 1972, pp. 238.

This anthology is edited with a prologue by Jean Rousselot, the introduction, selection and notes are by Milan Djurcinov while the translation into French is due to Jacques Gaucheron, Guillevic and Lucie Albertoni in co-operation with Klementina Grupceva and Vlada Urošević. Which is to say that the work of seven people has gone into its production, and one might therefore expect the pieces it contains to be the most representative of Macedonian poetry, consonant with the usual purpose and scope of anthologies. In spite of the collaboration of so many people, however, the present edition fails to correspond to its somewhat ambitious aims. All too obvious is the attempt to bridge the gaps with texts that belong to the literature of other nations or to fill out the anthology with prose instead of poetry, for the sole purpose of bestowing a life-span of centuries on the literature of a language that was imposed after the Second World War.