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## **Housewives in Ecumenical Dialogue: The Wall Between Us**

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with which the Roman Catholic position has been associated by protestant reformers, and which the Council of Trent took great pains to avoid.

It is clear that in describing as intellectualist Ficino's doctrine that one should "study in order to know God" or that "the study of philosophy... [is] the road to wisdom," Professor Jayne is reading Ficino in terms of an abstract dialectic, a dialectic characteristic of an Aristotelian or a scholastic method of study. But there is another dialectic. It is that which Augustine learned from Neoplatonism, whereby the ascent towards God in knowledge is identically the same as the ascent in virtue (See M. de Corte, *Aristote et Plotin* [Paris, 1935], ch. IV, especially pp. 229-232). Only in the context of this Neoplatonic dialectic can we begin to understand why, though Ficino often writes of man's movement toward his *summum bonum* as an ascent in contemplation, he also describes that state of ultimate blessedness as a 'mixture of wisdom and delight' (Ficino, *Comment. in Platonem* [*In Platonis Philebum*], in *Opera* [Basel, 1576], p. 1206). In another place Ficino writes that our end is to see God by means of our intellect and to delight in God by means of our will (Ficino, *Theologica Platonica*, XIV, 2 in *Opera*, p. 307). In the *De christiana religione*, Ficino's Neoplatonic dialectic is manifest; he writes, for example, that no one can attain beatitude, which consists in the contemplation of God, unless he loves God ardently, that no one can love God ardently, unless he hopes in Him; and that no one can hope in God, unless he first believes in Him; then only can one be united with God (Ficino, *Opera*, p. 22).

Though these weaknesses seem considerable out of context, in Professor Jayne's work they are minor; they do not negate his thesis at all, nor do they lessen the effectiveness of his evidence. *John Colet and Marsilio Ficino* remains a milestone in Renaissance studies and, indeed, a monument in Colet scholarship.

ANTONIO V. ROMUALDEZ

## HOUSEWIVES IN ECUMENICAL DIALOGUE

THE WALL BETWEEN US: A Protestant-Catholic Dialogue. By Betty King and Lorraine Juliana. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, [c1964]. 173 pp.

*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (1961) defines dialogue as "a written composition representing two or more persons as conversing or reasoning." This definition well describes *The Wall Between Us*: an

ecumenical colloquy between two housewives, one, Betty King, "a convinced Protestant," and the other, Lorraine Juliana, "a convinced Catholic." From beginning to end, the conversational tone is never missing, even when one is explaining her Church's position to the other, or when one argues support for her belief. As a matter of fact, were it not for the subject discussed, the reader could mistake the exchanges as nothing more than simple housewifely chatter, an attempt to break the monotony of domestic chores and renew the ties of friendship. Both writers have managed to project clearly their personalities, and their book is an engagingly stimulating epistolary collection. It is perhaps the first (if not the only one) of its kind. For although the fraternal spirit engendered by Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council has resulted in a number of Catholic-Protestant dialogues, all of these have been or are being written by men.

The King-Juliana correspondence is the result of an invitation extended by Mrs. Ware King (an Episcopalian minister's wife, living on an Indian reservation in Wyoming) and accepted by Mrs. Joseph B. Juliana (convert from New Mexico, featured columnist in three Catholic papers) "to try exchanging a series of letters...for our own enlightenment and enjoyment." Neither author was dreamer enough to imagine there would be but little difference between them. In Mrs. King's words: "I think we'll be in a bad way if we don't recognize that the wall exists; but I think further that we can accomplish a lot of good by smiling at each other over the wall, praying for each other to the God who is above the wall, and poking around its boundaries to find out where we really are in relation to each other." Agreeing on this, each was sincere and generous enough to listen to the other. And at the end of colloquy, although there were no "conversions," each had found friendship, and such minor walls as had been founded on misapprehensions, ignorance and prejudice had been torn down.

*The Wall Between Us* does not devote itself exclusively to the differences between the writers' beliefs. Mrs. Juliana refers to the Bible which both accept as "inspired" but she notes that they disagree on who is "qualified to interpret" it. She states that she does not accept the "principle of 'private interpretation'." On the other hand, Mrs. King says that "my strongest resistance to your Church is that I feel it denies personal freedom to the individual . . . ."

The book is also full of references to things that the authors agree on. Both are eager for personal sanctity; not only do they pray for one another, they also exchange suggestions to help them progress spiritually. Yet there is nothing maudlin or exaggerated about their concern for each other.

The frankness with which they questioned, the respect they had for one another, and the logic with which they expressed their position

make for stimulating reading. Their references to familiar details of daily living—such as a housewife's never-ending chores with children and husband, picking up after them, doing the dishes; their confessions of all-too-human feelings—disappointment with self, lack of interest in housekeeping routine—"Whew! Are you as tired as I am? I've spent so much time on this letter that the housework and ironing and even my piano practicing (!) have been neglected; I'll be happy to get it in the mail."—these charm the reader. The warmth of their mutual regard permeates the book. And when the last letter is written, the hymn with which Mrs. Juliana chooses to end it sums up the sentiment of the entire dialogue.

Blest be the tie that binds  
Our hearts in Christian love  
The fellowship of kindred minds  
Is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne  
We pour our ardent prayers;  
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,  
Our comforts and our cares.

We share mutual woes  
Our mutual burdens bear;  
And often for each other flows  
The sympathizing tear.

When we asunder part,  
It gives us inward pain;  
But we shall still be joined in heart,  
And hope to meet again.

It is true that theologians may have more precise and penetrating analyses of the differences between the Christian churches. But the average individual may never have access to such work. And even if he had, it is not too certain that he would react to it. To such a one, *The Wall Between Us* may have more meaning than a thousand theological treatises. For in it, one gets the distinct impression that he shares the problems and the joys of people like himself.

MARIA TERESA COLAYCO

## CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE APOSTOLATE

THE CHURCH AND CULTURES. By Louis J. Luzbetak, S.V.D.  
Techny, Ill.: Divine Word Publications, 1963. 417 pp.