

## BLACKFRIARS

AN INTRODUCTION TO PASTORAL THEOLOGY. By H. Balmforth, L. Dewar, C. E. Hudson, and E. W. Sara. (Hodder and Stoughton, 10s. 6d.)

The serious theological flaws in this book, written by Anglicans for Anglicans, are obvious and will be readily detected. They will not therefore detract from the singular usefulness which the book as a whole should have for Catholic pastors. Special attention must be called to the psychological strand running through its pages and to the expressly psychological sections.

The instruction on the care of children, particularly, is full of deep and difficult things delicately yet strongly treated. Psychologists—especially Jungians—will find an answering echo to: "Knowledge is necessary, but if the child is to develop a right sentiment towards sex his emotional attitude towards the body, and later towards the fact of sex, is of greater importance" (p. 184); "These and all other such questions must be answered simply but quite truthfully, the amount of information given being enough to satisfy curiosity for the moment" (p. 185); "Stories about Jesus, God's Son, who came to earth to reveal God's love. These stories can be used as the first steps in the practice of meditation: the child should be encouraged to talk to God about these stories, and to think over them by drawing them with crayons on coloured paper" (p. 191).

In the section on mental and spiritual disease key passages stand out: "In this psychological investigation the most assured result—on which all schools of psychology are agreed—is that the root of the trouble is invariably to be found in the earliest years of a child's life. Freud has been much reviled for attacking the doctrine of the 'innocence' of the small child. Yet certainly no Christian need quarrel with him on that score. We need go no further than St. Augustine's *Confessions* for full corroboration" (p. 197); "The doctrine of the Œdipus Complex is not popular, but nobody with any experience of psychotherapy can doubt the fact of its existence" (p. 202); "The unconscious sense of guilt derived from the Œdipus Complex is also manifested in some forms of scrupulosity" (p. 203); "The average man is apt to be stubbornly incredulous concerning the reality of the Œdipus Complex. For example, a priest of long and wide experience in hearing confessions told us that he had never come across a single instance of it. The truth of the matter is that he had never been led to suspect its existence because he had never heard of it. In any case, penitents must not be expected to confess to it!" (p. 203); "Herein [the Electra Complex] is a possible unconscious root of aggressive atheism, where the individual gratifies his desire to 'down' his earthly father, by denying the existence of the Heavenly Father" (p. 204); "It will be clear that the root of all mental maladjust-

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ment is egoism or self-love. Whether it is the selfish desire to possess the mother (or the father); whether it is the egoism of phantasy which builds in the air castles where the self is king; whether it is selfish ambition to be first in the small field of the family or the wider field of the world; in each and every case self-love is the cause of the mischief. When the path of self-love is consciously chosen, we speak of sin. When it is unconsciously or . . . when there are both conscious and unconscious factors—we have those mixed states . . . which give rise to most perplexing problems for the pastor" (p. 210).

The cryptic *obiter dictum*, that "it is probable, indeed, that the number of clergy who are capable of undertaking a full and deep analysis will never be large" (212), must be recorded. Whilst: "If, moreover, the psychotherapist takes the view that the Holy Spirit is working in the unconscious minds of his patients, he will be saved from many of the errors to which other therapists may succumb" (p. 213), is deeply suggestive. "A neurotic is one whose pride, or self-love, has come into serious collision with the circumstances of life" (p. 215), is a good definition. With the separation of treatment for morbid cases from the confessional (p. 222) we emphatically agree; as also with the unusually discriminating and qualifying admiration of Adler's Individual Psychology (p. 223). And "'For verily the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.'" The whole Christian ideal is enshrined in these words, and they contain the secret which every neurotic has failed to grasp" (p. 224), is a fine statement of the general drift of the process of "cure."

Further, "A single dream may reveal with amazing clearness the patient's unconscious attitude to life" (p. 227), with the discussion on the certitude with which we can interpret dreams (p. 229), is informative and convincing.

The nucleus of this chapter is, indeed, a suggested outline of a "method" to be followed by a parish priest, not deeply analytic, but of a "first aid" character, where "the important point is that it cannot do harm," whilst, with a share of luck and human competence, it may do a great deal of good.

"There is, therefore" (p. 232), "plainly an opening for the Church, if it will avail itself of it before it is too late. If this opportunity is not seized, the time will come when the medical profession will awake to the situation, and in those days the psychoneurotic will look to medicine rather than to religion for the help he needs."

Here, then, are special problems of Pastoral Theology treated expertly, according to principles and facts learnt from their sources and applied accurately, with a refreshing sense of responsibility as against a nebulous faith in an hypothetic common

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sense so often trusted in these matters. In this book we find a gold-mine of rare things, with a frank treatment of such unhappily real facts as scrupulosity, anxiety, homosexuality, recidivism, and sadism, all of which need deliberate and open facing in our paranoiac age. The manuals of moral theology too frequently deal with these questions in brief paragraphs and obscure footnotes. Little can be culled from them beyond gratuitous etymologies and practically useless topography in the theological scheme. Whereas there are rich fields of carefully verified psychological research on these subjects, from which the priest should surely be ready to draw, whatever their source, in order to become competent to deal with those new problems and new crises which the modern mind is ever throwing up from the depths of its psychic life for pastoral care and sympathetic disentanglement. Modern man has his own crises, his own Gethsemane, and he is straitened until the change is accomplished. Whither he is going we do not know. But one clear fact stands out: analytical psychology has been raised up providentially to deal with this crisis in the soul of our western world. Ultimately we have no inkling of what the mysterious products of psychological research *mean*. We have been given a weapon; and it is as unintelligible as the enemy to be thwarted. The enemy, however, is a present fact; and the weapon *works*. In the immediate context that is all that matters. Priests and ministers of religion may, if they choose, seek to discredit the theoretical conclusions. But good sense and candour demand frank admission of the empirical facts.

One of these facts is the power of psychology to deal with those specific crises and obscurities of vision in the seething spirit of modern man.

Nor is it enough to shrug our shoulders at the whole problem, dismissing these crises as "rare," "morbid," "abnormal." For of our generation this generalization is false. To-day at least—let us have that much clarified—the crabbed footnotes of our manuals need expansion. To deny it is to blind ourselves to realities. For what priests must surely know in the confessional the literature of psychoanalysis has cried from the housetops. To ignore it, to dismiss it as "morbid," "abnormal," is to impose silence upon the inarticulate birth-cries of modern man, to neglect the directions and drifts of our epoch's unconscious trend. If modern man is to create he will create in those directions. If modern man is to know, love, embrace anew the religion of Jesus Christ, he will achieve it alone in and through and along the lines of those irresistible drifts. The evidences of man's inner and tragic needs well up from the sea of his psychic life. These upsurgings and seethings of fruitless desire are the only signs we have in the guidance of modern souls.

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Without them we walk in darkness. With them we have some foreshadowing of what Christ might do with them. For He builds Himself into what they are and have, moulding the scattered vision, the half-formed wish. Through the dominant drives of the psyche we know the way God is willing to enter. Nor can we extinguish the Spirit.

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A DIALOGUE OF COMFORT AGAINST TRIBULATION. By St. Thomas More. Edited by Monsignor Hallett. (Burns, Oates; 7s. 6d.)

This modernized version of a book written in 1534 during More's imprisonment in the Tower, brings nearer the day—foretold by his nephew and editor, William Rastell—when More's works will be "joyously embraced and had in estimation of all true English hearts." And this one more than most, for, excepting his brief epitaph, it is the nearest approach to an autobiography that the saint ever wrote. We are profoundly grateful to Mgr. Hallett for having made it so accessible.

More was, in part, dealing with a dangerous subject: the proper bearing of Catholics under a growing tyranny; a denial of the theory that the head of the State might dictate the religious belief of his subjects; hence the disguise, the analogy of the Turks harrying the eastern frontiers of Europe; the march on Christendom. Written in dialogue form, Antony is More himself; Vincent probably stands for his daughter, Margaret Roper.

As might be expected of one for whom "to die is gain," the greater his trials, the more cheerful of soul does More become; the *Dialogue in Comfort* abounds in merry anecdote, and outdoes in joy previous works, written when he was rising to power in the King's service. Not the least of his humour is the obvious parallel between Henry and the Great Turk.

There is much ascetical and mystical teaching in the book; instructions for the treatment of scruples; at times, advice to take counsel of the bodily physician: "For sith the soul and the body be so knit and joined together, that they both make between them one person; the distemperance of either other engendereth sometime the distemperance of both twain" (p. 144). The whole provides a commentary on the doctrine of the successive purifications, so needful if we are to reach that holiness which is the normal prelude to the life of heaven; a doctrine whose burden is best given in More's own words: "Some are in the beginning of tribulation very stubborn and stiff against God, and yet at length tribulation bringeth them home" (p. 15).

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