

RECENT GERMAN BOOKS

Professor Lortz has devoted so much of his life and learning to Church Unity that it is no surprise to receive from his pen a short booklet about St Francis (*Der unvergleichliche Heilige*, Patmos-Verlag). For St Francis in so many ways typifies the rejected one who becomes the cornerstone of the building, just as the Jews, the Protestants and the laity have frequently been rejected before being brought back into the centre of the Church. Although it is an expanded version of a lecture, and is very much concerned with St Francis' message for us here and now, the booklet's supply of learned notes at the back will also give it an appeal to scholars.

Equally learned are the 450 pages of the fifth volume of Dr Neidermeyer's *Pastoralmedizin* (Herder, 1952, DM.24.50) on psychopathology and psychotherapy. In this survey of the contemporary situation Dr Niedermeyer clears up many difficulties and cites concrete examples to illustrate his points—the cases, for instance, of people who seem to be idiots and yet are sometimes leading a most intense spiritual life. But the most fascinating section of his book is that where he tries to relate the findings of recent psychotherapy to the healing function of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Only a beginning, these pages make us look forward with excitement to the author's more extensive exposition of the great poet and prophet. Dr Dobbeltsein's *Psychiatrie und Seelsorge* (Herder, DM.6.80) ranges over similar subjects but is more practical, having been written specially for priests, to enable them to recognise and distinguish mental illnesses of various kinds. Once more, it is very inspiring to learn from a psychiatrist who never loses his sense of the individual's eternal worth, even when that individual seems sub-human.

Many people attribute the neurotic difficulties of our age to a breakdown in family life, without always indicating precisely how the modern family differs from previous types of family. A very useful contribution to this discussion comes from the *Dokumente* (Offenburg) team, whose December number was devoted to 'The position of the family in Europe'. It consists of two valuable introductory essays, by Jacques Leclercq and Robert Boudet, followed by reports from the countries of Western Europe.

Finally, we have a 'Sketch of a Trinitarian Ontology' by Clemens Kaliba (Otto Mueller Verlag, Salzburg) which attempts to describe the world as a mirror of the triune God. It is a gallant attempt, and there are occasional illuminations, but the book is written in that German style popularised by Heidegger which is very difficult for an Englishman to understand. The present reviewer only understood passages here and there.

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