

THE PRIEST AND THE UNCONSCIOUS. By Erwin Ringel, M.D., and Rev. Dr Wenzel Van Lun. (Mercier Press; 6s.)

This little book is the substance of a course of lectures given by the authors—a Catholic psychologist and a priest—on the theme, *The Importance of Depth-Psychology for the Practical Care of Souls*. It owes its publication to the keen and open-minded interest shown by the clergy who attended the lectures.

The authors never lose sight of the basic truth that God wills *all men* to be saved; there is no such thing as a 'hopeless case'. No doubt many cases seem hopeless, but modern psychotherapeutic practice has shown that such people can be helped and often cured. But the task is not one for the psychologist alone, nor for the priest alone; it demands the close co-operation of both.

The spheres of priest and doctor are established, and the role of each discussed. The dangers to which each is exposed, and the mistakes each is liable to make, and *must* avoid, are set out in a clear and orderly manner. We are given a succinct yet admirably lucid account of the three schools of psycho-analysis—the Freudian, the Adlerian, and the Jungian—and a useful estimate is made of the good and bad points of each. There is a candid and reasoned appeal to priests to reconsider their almost innate prejudices against psychotherapeutic treatment. The fears that medical psychology tends to minimize the reality of sin, and sets up as alternative explanations either illness or a purely social and cultural guilt complex, should be dispelled by the humble statement of the claims and limitations of depth-psychology. The purpose of analytic treatment is to help establish a harmonious and integrated personality, which will be the foundation for conscious, free decisions, give rise to creative, personal acts, and support the life of super-nature.

In what is, perhaps, the most fascinating section of the book—the chapter on the *Psychology of Faith*—the authors take up again this important question of an integrated personality as the basis of the life of super-nature. They adequately refute the possible charge of psychologism: while not saying that every loss of faith is caused by a neurosis, they say that it is so more times than we might suspect. And, an important point in the work of instruction, a neurosis is often an effective barrier to the acceptance of the faith by one who has no intellectual difficulties.

The authors recognize that a good priest who has no knowledge of modern psychology may still exercise a healthy and sane influence over others; but they warn him against the all too common extreme of supernaturalism, a habit of mind which ignores the natural forces, gifts and values in human nature. Put simply, the authors' case is this: we must never lose sight of the omnipotence of God and the power of

his grace; but we must not rely *passively* on that power and grace; we must make *active* use of every known means of preparing the path for the operation of grace in the world of nature.

It is not suggested that every priest should devote himself to this specialized branch of study and actively co-operate with a psychologist; but every priest is asked at least to be alive to what medical psychology has to teach about the human personality, so that he may apply himself to his confessional work with greater effect. The priest is often the first to have an opportunity of recognizing a disorder which frequently manifests itself for the first time in the confessional. He ought to be able to sense when a patient is ill and needs, in the first place, a cure on the natural level; and such people must be given to understand that *they are ill*, and that it is because of their illness that 'confession doesn't work'. Again, the task of spiritual rehabilitation, which is the priest's special work, requires great tact and a delicate psychological insight if the work of the doctor is not to be undone and the patient thrown back into a worse state than before. The authors have cases on record which confirm the claim that 'priests often increase the difficulties . . . by talking as if from the pulpit; they teach objective truth and pay no attention to the subjective situation of the individual'.

This book is not a piece of quackery. It is a sane and balanced study by men of the highest competency in their own particular line. One may not agree with all they say—for instance, that a neurotic is obliged under pain of sin to seek a cure—but at least one is stimulated and forced to face up to a number of important problems. More could have been said on the danger of breaking the seal of confession in the work of co-operation of priest and psychologist. The case histories presented are of great practical help in seeing the principles. And finally, a word of praise is due the translator for an excellent rendering of the German.

MURDOCH SCOTT, O.P.

THE DIVINE MASTERPIECE. By Gabriel M. Roschini, o.s.m. (The Mercier Press; 7s. 6d.)

THE MOTHER OF GOD. By M. M. Philipon, o.p. (The Mercier Press; 7s. 6d.)

The Mercier Press offers us two studies on our Lady by eminent theologians. The theme of each book is the same: Mary's mission as the Mother of God, and her role as Mediatrix of all graces. Inevitably, then, they have much in common; yet neither is a mere repetition of the other. Father Philipon gives more space to the doctrine of the divine motherhood and regretfully omits all consideration of the virtues and the gifts especially as related to our Lady. This, however, is a notion developed at some length by Father Roschini, and so each book complements the other. But there is a marked contrast of style.