

versions of the 'friends' of this type of psalm, not only that lamentations of this kind probably originated as ritual expurgations, but above all that Job himself is supremely the *anaw* of these psalms, that afflicted but righteous one who complains to Yahweh that his friends are failing to perform their sacred obligations to him. M. Steinmann does indeed recognize a similar conflict of attitudes in his notes on 22, 22-30, but apparently only with reference to a particular context. The reviewer would maintain that it is fundamental throughout the entire book. Again, one cannot agree that the connection between Job and the apocalyptic writings is anything like so close as is suggested (p. 300 ff.), or that in making Job an Edomite the author obeyed the same impulse which induced our Lord to choose a Samaritan as an example of charity (p. 80). The alleged biblical precedents for the peculiar dialogue form in Job are unconvincing, and one remains an adherent of the more usual view that it derives from Egyptian or Babylonian prototypes.

These objections are not for one moment intended to obscure the over-all excellence of the book. No serious student of Job can afford not to read it. For here M. Steinmann is presenting us, as only he can, with the distilled excellence of the very latest scholarship, and in addition offering several original and important contributions of his own.

JOSEPH BOURKE, O.P.

THE CHRISTIAN IMAGINATION. By Justus George Lawler. (Newman Press; \$3.00.)

This book is a series of essays on such subjects as education, marriage, theology, the sacraments, the Church, tradition and progress. The author is a layman, a member of the faculty of Religion in an American university. But these *Studies in Religious Thought* are not to be dismissed out of hand as laicized theology. As Fr John Oesterreicher points out in a very able Introduction, what Pius XII condemned on May 31, 1954, was a *theologia laicalis*, a laicized theology, which is opposite to a *theologia ecclesiastica*, a theology imbued with the spirit of the Church. The Holy Father spoke out against all, priests or layman, who think themselves to be teachers in their own right, and who claim a role distinct from, or even set against, the public teaching authority of the Church.

In assessing the different problems involved, the author shows how the only way to a solution is that of St Thomas himself, the middle way which avoids the extremes of opinion yet touches both camps; rooted in tradition, the middle way is at the same time open to the realities of the present; the Church, as Pius XII has said explicitly,

'does not muffle itself in the abstract . . . it is not and cannot be separated from the world which surrounds it'. But the middle way is not the lazy man's compromise; indeed it is often easier and 'safer' to fall into line with one or other extreme. For instance, in discussing reform movements within the Church Mr Lawler raises the important issue of obedience and rightly quotes with approval the teaching of Père Congar, among others, on this point. On the one hand it is recognized that Catholics should be formed and trained to an *ad litteram* obedience to legitimate authority, an obedience which is given promptly and willingly; for in the last analysis 'the test of the mature Catholic is whether he gladly orders his thinking, speaking, and doing under the *magisterium* of the Church'. (Introduction.) On the other hand there is what Père Régamey has called the 'abuse of obedience'. As Père Congar puts it, this great and marvellous force 'sometimes gives place to an excess: that of considering in practice that there is only one virtue, obedience—even as there is only one sin, that of the flesh. This habituates both clergy and faithful to a certain lack of initiative, even where life would demand that it be taken. One might even go to the extreme of conceiving religion as something ready-made, completely determined from on high, extrinsic to the personal decision of conscience. . . .'

In his essay on education Mr Lawler shows that he has in great measure the wisdom of the East when he points out the futility of a frantic emphasis on method and technique to the exclusion of the personal elements: if the wrong man uses the right means, the right means work in the wrong way; whereas if the right man uses the wrong means, even the wrong means work in the right way. The first task of the educator (in the widest sense) is to educate himself to a knowledge of himself, for only then can he achieve that objectivity which is necessary for any inter-personal communication of thought and feeling; only then will his methods and techniques work in the right way.

The mature man is never faced with the problem: shall I obey, be a yes-man, and acquiesce in barren mediocrity, or shall I disobey and achieve something worthwhile? He obeys, not as a yes-man, nor with the divided loyalty of someone torn between fidelity to the present and fidelity to the future, but as one who, wholly faithful to the prescriptions of the Church here and now on any matter, still retains his individual initiative; then, almost inexplicably, the desired reforms come in time.

The spirit of this important book is that of the great Archbishop John Ireland, quoted in its pages:

'Let there be individual action. Laymen need not wait for priest,

nor priest for bishop, nor bishop for pope. The timid move in crowds, the brave in single file. When combined efforts are called for, be ready to act and prompt to obey the orders which are given; but never forget that vast room remains for individual action.

It is partly because this truth has too often been forgotten that we have the problem of leakage from the Church, not to mention delinquency and broken marriages. Too many leave the Church not because of a lack of Faith, in the technical sense, or even because of bad will, but because they cannot breathe; like the claustrophobic, they feel compelled to break out of the bounds of what to them is a ready-made, repressive system of religion. No doubt, like the claustrophobic, much of the trouble arises from their own immaturity. But is the educator (parent, teacher, priest) free from all responsibility merely because he can say with truth that he never taught them anything that was not right?

MURDOCH SCOTT, O.P.

CHRISTIAN ETHICS. By Dietrich von Hildebrand. (Thames and Hudson, London, 1953; 35s.)

The reading of this book is an extremely laborious task. The style is diffuse and often obscure. There can be no doubt about the author's moral earnestness nor about the amount of thought and reflection that have gone to the making of the book; unfortunately, he parts company with St Thomas almost from the first page and, as a result, is led into interminable discussions which could have been avoided by an acquaintance, not with isolated texts of Aristotle and St Thomas, but with their teaching as an organic whole. The work centres round the elusive notion of value, which, however, is never clearly explained. Through an univocal conception of the word 'desire', the statement that the good is what all things desire, for St Thomas the first principle of the practical intellect, is rejected, and value, here the good in itself, is set up as an absolute. It is an immediately intuited fundamental datum without any reference explicit or implicit to the will. We think that the author has failed to distinguish between the perfect, which is an absolute notion, and the good, which is the perfect as an object of appetite. Many long pages of discussion of the different types of value could have been simplified by noticing the difference between the realm of being and that of activity. The explanation of moral value makes no reference, so far as we can see, to the all-important conformity with right reason, and in this connection it is noteworthy, though strange, to find a full-length study of Ethics, and Christian Ethics at that, without any reference to the virtue of prudence. The author is also at odds with St Thomas on the question of freedom and on certain important points concerning the moral virtues. Perhaps