

If it be true that Mary represents the Motherhood of God, her dominion over her Son is not so surprising, and our faith in her intercession is certainly not misplaced. That which remained hidden from the beginning is made known to us through Mary. The Jehovah of the Jews, a God of justice and power is revealed as our tender Mother as well as our omnipotent Father; and is not the Holy Spirit the Bond of Love, uniting the Motherhood to the Fatherhood, and overflowing in the Person of the Son, through whom he is for ever poured forth upon the Church for her sanctification?

The beauty of the Spring, the loveliness of 'Nature', the innocence of young creatures, the abounding richness of life, spiritual as well as physical, and the glories of the Saints, both men and women, all speak of parenthood, the union of two divine elements producing eternally new generations of beings, which all have taken rise in the love of God, Father and Mother of every created thing.

A DISCALCED CARMELITE



## GOD AND THE UNCONSCIOUS<sup>1</sup>

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FR VICTOR WHITE has contributed so frequently to *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT* that any attempt to avoid a slightly domestic atmosphere in this account of his work would be forced and unnatural. Not that this present collection of his essays contains more than one which has appeared here already. Some day, we hope, the others which have been published here may also be collected into a book. Such a work would be more concerned with the theological side of the frontiers of psychology and theology than is *God and the Unconscious*, where psychology is at least the starting-point—though never the terminus. Much of the material will be familiar to the readers of *Blackfriars*, *Dominican Studies*, and the Guild of Pastoral Psychology pamphlets. But there are several important new chapters; all the essays have been re-worked; and the result is a book of surprising unity. Furthermore, there is a most illuminating appendix by Fr Gebhard Frei (it 'should straighten out once and for all what has proved one of the most considerable tangles which confront the theologically-minded student of Jung, namely, his conception of the "Self"

<sup>1</sup> By Victor White, O.P. (Harvill Press, pp. vii-xxv, 277; 21s.)

in its religious aspects'). And the Foreword by Dr Jung himself is also interesting, if somewhat baffling.

Since I am no more of a psychologist or a theologian than is any reasonably educated Catholic I might conveniently begin by suggesting why these essays of Fr Victor White's are proving such a great help to the reasonably educated Catholic—and especially, perhaps, to those of the younger generation. It is that he treats the Catholic faith as though it means something and is relevant to the problems we encounter daily. Secondly, that he assumes his readers to be mature human beings wanting to know the truth, not overgrown children in search of a consoling dummy—not even a Catholic dummy.

It may sound rather startling to suggest that practising Catholics fail to treat the faith as 'relevant' and 'meaning something'. But are such failures really so unusual? For instance, is it even a rare thing for a person at the ritual of baptism to wonder what puny sorts of devils are leaving the child in face of these perfunctory passes? And if we are going to acquiesce in such perfunctoriness, simply accepting evil spirits as an outmoded superstition inconveniently embedded in the ritual, need we go on pretending about the rest of the deposit of faith? Because 'not only the words and actions of Christ as related in the Gospels, but also the Epistles, and still more obviously the Apocalypse, are largely unintelligible except on the supposition of the reality of Satan and other evil spirits' (Ch. X, 'Devils and Complexes', p. 179)—this is the kind of language we are meant to use, presumably, when we are told to let our answers be 'Yea, yea', and 'Nay, nay'. And how refreshing it is to find a thinker who takes the angels sufficiently seriously to suggest that they operate 'by the excitation of the neurones of the cerebral cortex—see J. C. Eccles, F.R.S.: "Hypothesis Relating to the Brain-Mind Problem", *Nature*, Vol. 168, etc.'. The world of *Nature*, the Brain-Mind Problem, and J. C. Eccles, F.R.S., is a world where most of us feel at home; there is every reason to welcome the angels to it. Similarly the healing function of the Christian mystery is presented in this book as central—not as an embarrassing extra. All these pages, in fact, are full of the primitive *power* of Christianity, and give one a fresh and direct sense of the world-transforming *power* which is a most obvious feature of the primitive Church.

As for the maturity which Fr White demands of his readers, it is best described in the words with which he concludes the chapter on 'Freud, Jung, and God.' After outlining the challenge implicit in Jung's psychology, he writes:

'Whether we belong to any denomination or none, he (i.e. Jung) challenges us to become more conscious, more responsible, more adult in our religion—or irreligion—if we would not destroy ourselves and our fellows. Western man fools himself when he thinks he has outgrown

religion and has no need of God—as he is learning in the bitter Nemesis to his pretensions to self-sufficiency. But he *has* outgrown an infantile religiosity which is no more than an escape-mechanism, an outer and theoretic compensation for an inner godlessness in practice. When the salt has lost its savour, it is indeed good for nothing but to be trodden down by men.’

It can be seen that the study of deep-psychology, when pursued with such discrimination, vitalises Christian truths which are in danger of going dead within our souls. The paragraph just quoted leads us inevitably to the ‘cultivation of an immanent Prudence’ which seems to have been lost in much post-Reformation Catholic moral theology (Ch. VIII, ‘Psychotherapy and Ethics, p. 158). This re-vitalising of moribund Christian truths under the stimulus of deep-psychology is again illustrated in the fact that ‘psychological analysis is seldom successful unless it brings about . . . a radical change of the patient’s conscious outlook, a *metanoia* or change of mind . . . a shifting of his whole centre of awareness. . . .’ (Ch. IX, ‘The Analyst and the Confessor’, p. 171.) Is this not a fact to inspire us Christians to seek after *metanoia* ourselves? Is there any good reason for allowing ‘conversion’ to remain a prerogative of those who come over to Rome, as though the need for conversion were not equally urgent in Rome? This is a subject which we hope to hear more about from Fr White sometime, because it is at the very heart of both Christianity and analysis. I mean, that a person may apparently have a conversion (from Communism to Catholicism, from neurosis to ‘normality’, etc.) and yet that person has just the same evil effect on other people as before (though now it is the Communists rather than the Catholics, and the neurotics rather than the ‘normal’, who feel the effects). It is as though the person’s basic mental counters have simply been shifted—but remain clustered around the same selfish centre—and so continue to produce the same effects, though in another place. Granted that this does happen, would not a more detailed study of *metanoia* (and *pseudo-metanoia*?) in his patients make it clear to the analyst that only *grace* can effect a sufficiently radical change of mind, one which transforms the patient’s ‘whole centre of awareness’? And it might even lead some analysts to recognise that their own change of mind was not supposed to come to an end at the moment they emerged from the process of analysis. The number of analysts who imagine that they are no longer in need of conversion once they have been analysed is very high, if we may believe the astringent remarks upon them in Theodore Reik’s *Inner Experience of a Psychoanalyst*.

This is an issue which seems particularly in need of clarification at a time when deep-psychology is part of everyone’s mental background; for there is certainly a danger that pre-occupation with psychology will shift

our centre of awareness away from the grace-sin axis on to the gnosis-ignorance axis. When this happens we begin to deplore our mistakes instead of confessing our sins. It is then that we become such a real menace both to ourselves and other people; for, limited creatures that we are, we can never know all the effects of our behaviour on other people or ourselves, and if we think we know then we create Hell all round. The sure way to stop creating Hell all round is to have Heaven within, and not all our creaturely wisdom can do that for us. Which is why I fervently hope that all who are interested in psychology will meditate long over Fr White's pages on Gnosticism (especially on the Knowing One . . . who sees that 'Inner World of Man' which is hidden from Tom, Dick, and Harry . . . and is in danger of becoming increasingly mastered and possessed by it). And the pages on *malum culpae* as against *malum poenae* (162-173) deserve the attention of us all.

The problem of evil seems to be the main bone of contention between Jung and Fr White; and we learn that their discussion has so far 'generated more heat than light' (p. 75, n.). This is not difficult to believe if St Thomas is correct when he tells us that you cannot profitably dispute about metaphysical principles with an opponent who refuses to take up any metaphysical position whatsoever. Jung does not acknowledge any metaphysical position (though if his refusal to equate evil and *privatio boni* is not a metaphysical position, I don't know what is!). Therefore the discussion has come to a deadlock.

However, there is a different discussion running through the book which we may hope has not come to a deadlock—that between the author and the Freudian school. Over the years there were significant, if subtle, changes in Freud's position which many of us have failed to take into account—partly influenced, I suspect, by Fr White's championship of Jung. If this inadequate account of *God and the Unconscious* does no more than stir its author to further reflections on Freud's development it will not have been fruitless.



## REVIEWS

THE CLOUD OF UNKNOWING and Other Treatises by a Fourteenth-Century Mystic. Revised, edited and introduced by Abbot Justin McCann, O.S.B. (Orchard Series; Burns Oates; 16s.)

A recommendation of a further edition of this great work should perhaps be prefaced with the words of the author: 'I pray thee, for God's love, that thou let none see this book unless it be such a one as thou thinkest is apt for the book. Those who do read it should read it as a whole for if a man saw one part and not another, peradventure he might