

tive paper on the 'Contribution of Monasticism to Spirituality in the World Today' by Fr Charles Boxer, O.P., in which he sketches this to be the provision of a sign for the Church and the World of the future course for Christianity, viz. to undergo a disintegration of its institutionalization and rediscover its purpose in involvement in the world. Just as in the past monasticism acted as a magnet drawing even the non-monastic parts of the Church away from the world, so now its task is to lead in the opposite direction. In the most theological paper the Bishop of Durham applies himself to the question of models for God and spirituality. He concludes that 'the best theology will be that which arises from most models, and is always open-ended to receive discourse from new models'. He sounds a welcome note in saying that the central problem of spirituality is the problem of the objectivity of God. Without that, spirituality too easily degenerates into a sort of psychologism and chases its own tail. The Archbishop of Canterbury supplies a short but mature contribution on 'The Idea of the Holy and the World Today'.

One of the comments on the conference printed at the end of the book criticizes the conference for being unreal. This is the way with conference papers because they have to be general and can only deal with that abstraction Modern Man (a faintly middle class and leftish character). It is not so with the discussions which follow the papers at conferences. They are usually very real because they deal with men and women known to the talkers. (They are also sometimes unprintable.) This general fact is envisaged in the book which modestly describes itself as a stimulus to discussion and no more. It should be read with this in mind.

As a stimulus to discussion one would have liked to see more explicit emphasis on the apophatic element in Christian spirituality. The point is made by three different speakers in the book that today contemplative prayer is the experience of beginners not of 'advanced' persons. If this is so, everyone should be having a living experience of the deficiency of the human mind before the divine and its consequent obligation to deny as well as to affirm things about God. Affirmation by itself leads

away from God. *Un dieu défini est un dieu fini*. We should all, then, have a lively sense of the relativity of our ideas and models for God. This means learning, in the Bishop of Woolwich's phrase, 'to sit loose to the image', reflecting among other things that the new, relevant, up-to-date models for God are as relative as the older ones now being superseded. In other words, we should be receiving an insight into the apophatic element in Christian spirituality. It is not the stock in trade of the monks and hermits only, but the tool which will help day-to-day Christians to have a dynamic approach to living in a changing world, and also to help others to do so. Modern Man is easily stereotyped, but modern men and women defy categorization. Those who try to help them need the Bishop of Durham's wise advice to have as many models as possible. All Christian models are aids to union with God, from the Sacred Heart to pantheism. Some are better suited to modern times than others. No one model suits all men, nor even one man in all his moods. What saves us from fruitless relativity in this is the realization that we can be led beneath our affirmations to the ineffable Reality which they both reveal and hide at the same time. There is a Mystery given in and through our experience of the world. We miss this Mystery not only when we are unaware of it but also when we are aware of it but tailor it to suit our modern needs.

This purging of models is what living spirituality must be about today. Fr Boxer's abrasive article points to a possible way in one sphere. Readers could well pray to have the courage to do the same in their lives. Hope lies in the fact that, whereas it is difficult to do this in the abstract because of the intangibility of Modern Man and Modern Problems, when you meet men and women (including yourself) your love for them finds a way. Which leads us to the not very new conclusion that we can't think our way through problems in spirituality, but we can somehow love our way through them. 'By love may he be gotten and holden but by thought never.' Isn't this how Pope John did it?

JOHN DALRYMPLE

ABELARD AND ST BERNARD: A STUDY IN TWELFTH CENTURY 'MODERNISM', by A. Victor Murray. *Manchester University Press*, 1967. 168 pp. 35s.

Beware of two things: the last labours of love of a very old man, and the forays of an inadequate reviewer. Here you have both! One

remembers Dr R. F. Treharne's dying effort to make the Glastonbury legends do what they would not; and one knows that possibly only

two men this side of the Channel could unravel the labyrinthine twists of Dr Murray's evidence, Dr Minio-Paluello of Oxford and Dr David Luscombe of Cambridge.

Born while Newman still lived, Dr Murray died on the summer day that this little study came to the reviewer's desk. Like Newman an Oxonian, he had been a scholar of Magdalen and a theologian at Mansfield. Until his retirement in 1959 he had been since the War President of Cheshunt College, the Mansfield of Cambridge. He counted himself an educationalist, a theologian and a historian, a master of many trades; and it is this that seems to give him authority to write such a study, at once highly theological (resting on the *Capitula Haeresum P. Abelardi*), historical (resting on the most famous intellectual confrontation in the Christian Church before Luther) and educational, at least in that Abelard was the protagonist of methods of thought which, while offending monastic ears, pioneered the processes of future university enquiry. So far so good, but where then in the 'select bibliography' is the crucial article by J. Rivière, 'Les CAPITULA d'Abélard condamné au Concile de Sens' RTAM V (1933)? Where are the modern Continental studies? Indeed, the only work cited from the 1960s is a broad survey of slight Abelardian coverage, Prof. Knowles's 'Evolution of Medieval Thought', and one is led to suspect that this is a youthful study resurrected and repolished. Where too are the modern texts? We are given Suger from PL instead of Panofsky, Bernard from Mabillon, and Abelard's own works from Cousin (1849-59) to the exclusion of Ruf and Grabmann, Geyer, Ostlender, Rozycki, Muckle and de Rijk (with their important introductions): Cousin's old title, *Introductio ad Theologiam*, is now more commonly known to scholars as the *Theologia 'Scholarium'* (just as Duns Scotus' *Opus Oxoniensis* is renamed the *Ordinatio*). Where is a critical discussion of the mysterious *Capitula* (never yet claimed for Bernard by Dom Leclercq, his modern editor) as the formal list of condemned propositions? Where is a close discussion of the *Epitome Theologiae Christianae*, now known to be

not the work of Abelard's pen but the Sentences of a certain Hermann, who too often and like the Scotists later on did not reflect the teaching of his master, a teaching which itself is impossible to crystallize in that its only constancy was in its fluctuation? To pin upon Abelard an accusation which was accurate and current was a task in itself, but Bernard and William of St Thierry made it doubly hard for themselves by possessing few of Abelard's writings and little understanding of the circumstances and ethos in which they had been developed or refurbished. Of Bernard's condemnatory propositions, only four are directly traceable to Abelard's writings. Dr Murray, for all his diligence, appears to share the ignorance of Bernard and his companions.

Our confidence is not won at the outset by the remark, 'the difference between them was psychological: Bernard was the intellectual type—everything had to be cut and dried; Abelard was the emotional type'. It refers in the first instance to the monk who wrote the sermon *On Conversion*, the tract *de Laudibus Militiae* and the 86 meditations on the Canticles; and in the second instance to the toughest academic brain before Aquinas and Occam. Part I, the Historical Background, has scarcely anything to offer us that is not better told in the 1932 work by J. G. Sikes. It follows curiously old sources like Herbert Workman (1913). At one point, Bernard's famous letter to the young Aelred of Rievaulx encouraging his *Speculum Caritatis* is quoted, but is claimed to be addressed 'to a master of a school in England, Henry Murdoch (Mabillon's note)'—Wilmart and Powicke might never have lived!

Part II, the Issue, does set out to do something new. Where former studies have brought face to face the mental climate of the monks with that of the dialecticians, Dr Murray has set out to equate the Bernardine charges with the Abelardian doctrine, an approach at once more precise. Charge by charge, Bernard is put up against what we can gather to be Abelard's actual tenets and teachings. This approach makes the book interesting indeed—but, alas, interesting only to novices who are glad to hear

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the story for the first time without too pressing a need for accuracy; and to those scholars sufficiently equipped to sift the tares from the

wheat. It is an old student's last endeavour, repetitive in detail, full of wheat but equally full of tares. ALBERIC STACPOOLE, O.S.B.

SOCIAL AND GENETIC INFLUENCES ON LIFE AND DEATH, edited by Lord Platt and A. S. Parkes. *Oliver and Boyd*, 1967. 222 pp. 63s.

BIOLOGY AND THE SOCIAL CRISIS, by J. K. Brierley. *Heinemann*, 1967. 260 pp. 35s.

MEDICINE ON TRIAL, by Dannie Abse. *Aldus Books*, 1967. 352 pp. 42s.

These three volumes are further examples of what Bernal, in his recent book *The Origin of Life*, described as 'the convergent generalizing trend that is replacing the divergent and specializing trend of the nineteenth century, with its various subjects separated by thought-proof partitions'. The method of each is different, however, and so is the value. Put on a straight material basis, the cash-value of the first works out at just over 3½d. a page, of the second at just over and of the third (with many coloured plates) at just under 1½d. a page. The first and third are worth every penny. The second is overpriced in terms of intellectual value. All are concerned with the study of Man 'from the cradle to the grave', or better, since each individual already has a long personal history of development behind him before he ever reaches the cradle, 'from the womb to the tomb' as it has been put.

The first-named work comprises the papers from the third Symposium of the Eugenics Society (September 1965) and has been admirably edited by two very distinguished scientists. Admirably proof-read, too—I noticed only one printing error, at the foot of page 183. The word 'eugenics' undoubtedly conjures up, for many people, visions of evil or misguided men 'tampering with nature' with a cold and calculating efficiency. One or two of the contributors show signs occasionally of that typical inhumanity that masquerades as objectivity. But the overwhelming impression of the papers in each of the Sections into which the symposium was divided ('Conception, Pregnancy and Birth', 'Some Major Causes of Illness: I Somatic Illness, II Psychological Illness', 'Causes and Effects of Ageing') is that there is a depth of real concern amongst the authors for their subjects and for the quality of life that they might by their efforts be able to bring to their fellow-men. Medical science has never before had the services of so many skilled and dedicated 'seekers after truth'. Science can, and sometimes certainly does, blunt the human response to suffering and disease, but the Eugenics Society seems happily free of all that.

Lay-readers should not allow themselves to

be put off by the scientific terminology necessarily used, especially in the first two papers dealing with genetic problems: it would be worth their while having at hand a dictionary of biological terms if necessary, in order to follow Polani on human chromosomal abnormalities, and Clarke in his admirable account of the elegant Liverpool technique for protecting mothers and their future offspring from the ravages of blood-group incompatibility. The prevention of death and morbidity is a noble aim and, as Clarke rightly says, it is 'pleasant to feel that we can occasionally outwit our inheritance'. Of course, one can never be quite sure just who or what is outwitting what or whom: as McKeown says, in his paper on 'Social and Biological Influences on Foetal and Infant Deaths', 'it is this uncertainty which has led to the use of the somewhat ambiguous term "potentially preventable", which at least has the excuse that it does not claim too much'. Claiming too much is a habit of some rather narrow biological specialists. It is usually avoided by doctors who actually have to deal with real, living human beings in all their astonishing complexity. Most of the contributors to this volume are doctors, aware to some extent of their limitations. From this particular point of view a chapter on 'Genetic Studies on Longevity', by a specialist on fruit-fly-genetics, falls badly short: the impression is given that longevity depends mostly on one's surrounding temperature, which may be all right for fruit-flies but is not necessarily true for man. Some astonishing expressions then come out, such as, 'the total amount of vitality runs down as the flies age, but is replenished from time to time when the fly feeds'. This mysterious essence or quality or elixir (what price phlogiston?) worries the author a little; but his later statement that 'we do not yet know what vitality consists of' suggests that they expect to have it worked out before the next conference.

Space is too short to mention all the good things in this volume. Kessel has a beautifully-constructed essay on Alcoholism, which would grace many a literary magazine. Fletcher neatly dissects and disposes of the view of Eysenck that