

AUTHORITY IN A CHANGING CHURCH, by John Dalrymple and others. *Sheed and Ward*, London and Sydney, 1968. 241 pp. 32s. 6d.

In this age of protest the concept of authority in the Church is inevitably called in question. Has anyone the right to tell me what to believe? Can it be right for me to obey an order which I think to be misguided? The first question concerns the Church's teaching authority; it is hard to see how any Catholic can give a negative answer. The second is about the Church's authority to govern. Whether it is consciously formulated or not, it is the question behind much of the unrest in the Church today.

If one turns to these Spode House papers for an answer to this second question, one will not find it. Their purpose is to investigate the spirit in which authority should be exercised and obeyed rather than to reconsider its right to exist.

Sebastian Moore, O.S.B., describes the contemporary dissatisfaction with the old structures in the Church. Robert Murray, S.J., expounds the New Testament concept of authority, and concludes that 'the institutional element in Christianity . . . is not part of the Gospel' (p. 19). Peter Harris asks why the Gospel has lost its saving power; his answer is that some dogmatic formulations which were evolved as answers to urgent problems have fossilized into irrelevant myths. Nicholas Lash's paper is a theology of the priesthood; he rejects the traditional indiscriminate attribution to the Christian priesthood of either the Levitical functions or the properties of Christ's unique priesthood, which in fact belong to the whole Church. Theo Westow traces the growth of institutionalism and sacralization in the Church's history. F. J. Van Beeck, S.J., gives a judicious account of the ferment in the Dutch Church. John Fitzsimons reports on the practice of government by consultation which is slowly gaining currency in diocesan life. Finally John Dalrymple discusses the qualities required in governors and governed if the voice of the Holy Spirit is to be heard.

This last paper is full of spiritual insight, and it is here, if anywhere, that we should expect to find an answer to the question we asked at first: should I disobey an order which seems to me unwise? But even here the question is unanswered, or rather an answer is taken for granted: disobedience is always a failure. To consider obedience and disobedience separately is a mistake because they are only the visible parts of a greater fact: the absence or presence

of love in the Church (p. 226). But ought not Fr Dalrymple distinguish between disobedience to the Holy Spirit, which is always a failure of love, and disobedience to a human superior, which may be loving obedience to the Spirit? The justification of this second kind of disobedience is, of course, recognized by the classical ascetical writers: you may not obey a superior who commands you to commit a sin. What is new to the modern sensitivity is the widening of the notion of sin to include what is imprudent: to perform an imprudent action is to sin by the omission of the desirable alternative. But a subject faced with an order that seems to him imprudent (after stating his views firmly) must ask himself whether the disruption of the community caused by disobedience would be a greater evil than the omission of the action which in itself would be more wise. Some persons are more sensitive to the demands of harmony within the community; others are more frequently willing to sacrifice harmony to a purpose to which they attach an overriding value. These two attitudes can sometimes seem to be two vocations, either of which is worthy of a Christian in a given situation. But if you follow the vocation of disobedience you must ask yourself, if you are honest, whether your disobedience is logically leading you to leave the particular institution to which obedience is owed. And if that institution is the Catholic Church itself, can love of God and fidelity to the Spirit ever prompt us to such an extreme step?

There are many wise and illuminating remarks to be found in these papers. We have space to quote only two. 'And so the church became "institutionalized". We must not let anyone stampede us into regretting the development. It had to come if the gospel was to become truly incarnate in human society' (Murray, p. 37). 'Power corrupts, and so also does protest. . . . The need for vigorous self-criticism to prevent ourselves making the cause of aggiornamento serve our private ends is paramount' (Dalrymple, pp. 214-5).

Nevertheless, as one reads one is aware of some characteristic defects of much popular post-Vatican II theological writing. One such defect is the emotive use of vogue-words: 'existential', 'historicity', 'experience' (in approval); 'institution', 'sacral', as terms of disapproval. The second is a self-righteous relish in denigrating past attitudes in com-

parison with our modern enlightened stance. The third is the substitution of incantation for rigorous argument, as if long-entrenched positions will surrender if they are denied often enough. How, for example, does Fr Lash know that when the kingdom has come, there will be no clergy and no laity, only Christians (p. 94)? Is Mr Westow really justified

in maintaining that in the first century differences of doctrine were accepted with equanimity (p. 112)? Has he considered St Paul's uncompromising attitude to his opponents?

We who vote progressive must beware of dogmatism and neo-triumphalism.

E. J. YARNOLD, S.J.

THE PARADOX OF GUILT: A CHRISTIAN STUDY OF THE RELIEF OF SELF-HATRED, by Malcolm France. *Hodder and Stoughton*, London, 1967. 128 pp. 25s.

Increasing numbers of clergy of all denominations are turning to professional psychologists for needed help in their pastoral ministry, and a fruitful dialogue is opening up from each direction. One of the pioneers in this country is Frank Lake, with his Clinical Theology Association, though his recent book on the question (*Clinical Theology*, D.L.T., 1966) had a mixed reception from the clinicians. He has, perhaps, been more successful with the clergy, as illustrated by the present book by one of his early pupils and a present collaborator. As such it is a blend of theology and psychology, and must stand or fall by the validity of what is offered from each discipline.

I am not a theologian, but did feel unhappy about the over-presentation of texts from the Old Testament, to the neglect of the New, especially the contribution of St Paul; I would have welcomed less frequent references to the bliss of Eden and the tribulations of Job, and more reference to the role of the Church in mediating to her members the fruits of the redemption from sin and guilt, rightly shown to have been won for us by the passion of Christ.

But it was as a psychologist that I was more unhappy, especially as one interested in applying the insights of experts in my field to the development of healthy concepts of moral and religious truths to children, and to their correction in adults. Despite the author's repeated insistence on the importance of right relations in infancy, I cannot share his conviction about the 'state of primal innocence' at this early stage, nor his equation of this with

the Eden myth and the Nirvana states induced in Dr Lake's patients under the influence of L.S.D. This does, of course, reflect the familiarity of the author with the works of Jung to the exclusion of those of Freud and his more recent followers, especially Melanie Klein (whose account of infant aggression is matched only by that offered by St Augustine in his *Confessions*).

This is an example of the paradox offered not so much by the theology of guilt as by the varieties of psychology that must face the non-expert in this, as in any other, field. This is not to pour cold water on this or any other such attempt, but simply to warn that 'a little learning' is still a dangerous thing. This is perhaps most seen in the many case-histories given in the book, usually without any clue as to how the problems have been tackled; not all cases that present themselves to the clergy will require full psychiatric treatment, but no reference is made of the need to do this at all. One of the few cases that is discussed gives perhaps too naive an outcome: '... when he found a clergyman who not only listened to him but also helped him to accept the badness of which he felt so ashamed, he made a great recovery from the depressed state into which he had fallen.' If Mr France has been able to help one such sufferer, his studies will not have been in vain, but I myself would hope for a much deeper examination of the problem before the full harvest of Dr Lake's labours in the field can be reaped.

D. M. BERRIDGE, S.H.C.J.

A DICTIONARY OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS, edited by John Macquarrie. *S.C.M.*, London, 1967. 366 pp. 63s.

MORALS IN A FREE SOCIETY, by Michael Keeling. *S.C.M.*, London, 1967. 157 pp. 25s.

A Dictionary of Christian Ethics is more than its title claims. Its subject-matter is not limited to Christian moral tradition, but covers the whole area of basic moral problems. It contains

excellent articles on the ethical systems of the ancient philosophers and introductory notes on the ethical teachings of all the great world religions, simple accounts of the ethics of the