

But not without reflection on these times,  
 these modern times, my loving meditation.  
 Don't worry. Yours is no unique condition,  
 your type of search and conflict and construction,  
 don't worry if you have no answer ready  
 to the lasting question . . . .

Love people.

Love entertains its own discrimination'.

Knowing no Russian, I found even these English equivalents of his poems delightful and moving.

BENET WEATHERHEAD, O.P.

CHILDREN AND THEIR RELIGION; by Eve Lewis; Sheed and Ward; 15s. od.

The best way to introduce this excellent book is, I think, to quote from the first page of the first chapter: 'I have been moved to write because I have come to see how often we fail to see that the child's capacity to understand spiritual matters develops very slowly. In our desire to help the young to love and serve God, we must remember this. Otherwise we may actually hinder spiritual development by presenting children with material for which they are not ready, or by expecting of them standards of behaviour which are far beyond any they can yet reach'. The word 'understand' is the key word in this context; it means not only to learn but to know: to grasp the object in its fullness, to feel its impact. She has come to understand the minds of children of different ages at a deep and meaningful level, and she wants to make us understand so that we may enable our children to receive their religion 'according to the mode of the receiver', as Aquinas puts it.

The author is by profession a psychologist with long experience of normal children in the schools, and of 'maladjusted' ones in a Child Guidance Clinic. She is of the Jungian persuasion, and therefore has a settled and coherent background from which to set forth her views. This means a little too much description of the various types and attitudes of children in Jungian terms, and perhaps a little more of the 'collective unconscious' than a non-Jungian can take; but her framework certainly gives confidence and shape to the whole, and we are given fascinating glimpses into the unconscious side of the child mind.

The first half of the book deals with subjects such as 'The Unconscious Mind', 'The Child's World', 'The Obligations of Parenthood', 'The Child's World and Parents', while the second half takes us by stages into the child's ideas, activities, feelings, and disturbances of emotion, at the three divisions by age: infant, middle years, and adolescence, and at each stage suggestions are given as to the kind of religious approach which would seem appropriate to each.

We are constantly reminded how the child's natural background—chiefly in terms of his relationship to the parents—is projected on to his ideas about the supernatural, and how the two can be intimately and beautifully conjoined.

In other words, a child's unconscious as well as conscious attitude to authority, in turn arising from his feelings about his parents, will tremendously influence his grasp of and his retention of his religion; above all during the critical period of adolescence. This does raise the question, however, whether this grasp of religion must be so dependent on the personality as influenced by environment. The author of course allows for the mysterious working of Grace, but this may not appear clearly from the above.

The whole book is meant as a psychological introduction or background to the imparting of religious *knowledge*, but it also contains very practical hints and ideas as to ways of imparting instruction at different ages, e.g., the place of the Old Testament, the heroic aspect of our Lord, the place of holy pictures, and so on.

She has valuable remarks about the challenge of adolescence, which is often so grievously misunderstood. For example: 'I have sometimes thought that too much of the money and energy that we expend in providing youth clubs and other means where the young can amuse themselves is, in effect, saying: "run away and play". If we more often said, as is being said by some admirable organizations: "we need your help here, and here, and here", we should have a ready response from the young people because we were giving them honour'.

The price of the book may seem high for a paper-back, but it is worth every shilling.

CHARLES BURNS