

saint, Catherine of Siena, but they are certainly not what most strikes a reader of the *Vida*; and on page 115 the writer seems almost to suggest that St Teresa's reform went too far. A slight over-enthusiasm for Henri IV and a latent distrust of Spain are other features of the book which one might question.

But these are minor criticisms of a biography which leaves the reader fascinated—and regretting that the veil which shuts off from us Barbe's life in God could not have been more completely drawn aside. Perhaps Mr Sheppard will give us a second book dealing more explicitly with Barbe Acarie's inner life, thus enhancing the value of this attractive—and eminently readable—biography.

K.P.

MARRIAGE, MORALS AND MEDICAL ETHICS. By Frederick L. Good, M.D., LL.D., and Rev. Otis F. Kelly, M.D. (Clonmore and Reynolds; 12s. 6d.)

In the words of the authors' note, 'This work is a discussion of medico-moral problems in matrimony confronting priests, physicians, nurses, social workers, hospital administrators, and all those who need responsible information'. There is an introduction by the Archbishop of Boston. The book is jointly written by two distinguished Harvard Medical School graduates, one a priest-theologian-psychiatrist, the other a celebrated gynaecologist, both Consultants to the Matrimonial Tribunal of the Archbishop of Boston. Certainly it may be read with confidence and with great profit, by those whom it may concern.

Timely advice is given on premarital instruction, but it seems to us an over-statement to say that the Laws of the Church impose a grave obligation upon the pastor and confessor to make provision for such instruction on the physiological level concerning the proper exercise of the sexual function in marriage.

The treatment of 'indirectly voluntary' actions is particularly good, and the adjoined diagram will be found most useful in the application of the principle to particular cases.

The reader will find wise discernment in many of the reflections. Thus disapproval is rightly expressed of those physicians, sometimes in good faith, who lull their own consciences by passing on patients to others to perform operations which they themselves cannot ethically justify. This is not only a shifting of responsibility but a cause of scandal. The same holds good with regard to other forms of co-operation. Some remarks on page 28 clearly indicate the distinction between conscience and moral sense, and are invaluable.

Some of the medical findings are particularly useful to know. That the viability of a child is to be reckoned from the time of ovulation. That

the undergoing of the caesarian section more than three times is not necessarily dangerous. The explanation of the 'Rhythm' method and the accompanying chart is not without its value, and may help to correct unrealistic assumptions adopted by some moralists. There may possibly remain some debate among experts regarding the existence of an absolutely sterile period.

The outline of Psychiatry seems only useful for those who need to know the elements of the subject, though there are shrewd judgments valuable to priests and others. Psychiatry is described as 'the branch of the medical profession dealing with abnormal conditions or diseases which affect adversely the mental functions of man'. Since this is so, 'a Psychiatrist is a physician, that is, a Doctor of Medicine, who has added to his fundamental medical education the further education and training necessary to qualify him as a specialist in this field. No one else can call himself a psychiatrist without exposing himself to suspicion of quackery.' Every priest should learn from psychiatry how to help those in need during the course of his work: 'but he should never allow himself to think he is a psychiatrist or allow others to think so, unless, of course, he really is an M.D. with the necessary psychiatric training'.

Commentaries on Baptism and Extreme Unction give the book added usefulness. Comparison of a sacrament with a unit of paper currency (p. 190) explains its efficacy in terms rather less than thomist.

AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.

THE GOD OF THE WITCHES. By Margaret Alice Murray. (Faber; 21s.)
WITCHCRAFT. By Pennethorne Hughes. (Longmans; 21s.)

Dr Margaret Murray in her second book on witchcraft has elaborated her original thesis and has presented further material in its support. Her contention that witchcraft, as known from the records in the historic Christian era, is the remnant of a once-flourishing pagan cult which was given a demoniac flavour by its rival, Christianity, has much to support it. Readers would do well, if they want to get the most out of this stimulating study, not to react to its somewhat vehement and aggressive presentation.

The first five chapters offer us the material: the horned god, the worshippers, the priesthood, the rites, the religious and magical ceremonies. In these sections the reaction of the Christian legal authorities to the cult are given, including many extracts from the records of the witch trials. In the two last chapters on the function of the witch in social structure and the divine victim, Dr Murray allows herself a little imaginative licence and her reconstruction of the lives and deaths of William Rufus, Thomas à Becket, Joan of Arc and Gilles de Rais, all seen as 'divine victims', makes fascinating reading.