

tures and the liturgy, that the seven-hundred-year-old letters of this Friar have so much to offer us today.

S. M. ALBERT, O.P.

THE ONE TRUE KIRK. By Ronald Walls. (Burns & Oates; 15s.)

At any time the story of a Scottish Presbyterian minister's return to the auld kirk of Rome is news. It does not, alas, happen very often. Such a story appearing at this time has an added interest and poignancy. Four hundred years ago the old religion of Scotland was swept away, and with it much of the warmth and romance of Scotland's past. Nearly two hundred years later there was a brief interlude of romance when the Catholic Prince Charles Edward set foot in Scotland. That passed and once again the glowering spirit of Knox brooded over Scotland. But those defiant words of Mary Queen of Scots, 'Your kirk is not my kirk, Mr Knox', still echo far beyond Holyrood.

Mr Ronald Walls heard a variant of Mary Stuart's words when, as an Edinburgh University student holidaying with a Catholic family in Hungary, a girl said to him: 'My religion goes back to St Peter: yours goes only to Luther'. This Hungarian holiday was one of the signposts on the way home to the old faith. There were many others, meetings with Catholics, discovering Catholic books, such as the late Mgr Ronald Knox's *The Belief of Catholics*. All the way through Mr Walls' fascinating story one has the impression that he was bound to end up in the old faith. There is more than a hint of 'High Church', which may surprise a Catholic reader who has lived among old-style Presbyterians.

Even so, an authentic picture of the Scottish kirk emerges. We meet the die-hard elder hostile to any innovation that smacks of 'popery'. We meet, too, the kindly village folks. We share in their daily lives; we learn what the solemn communion means to them, and come to understand other features of the Presbyterian way of life.

Mr Walls tells a moving and, at the same time, a joyous story, which is a hopeful sign in the land that, before John Knox, was the *filia specialis* of the Holy See.

KIERAN MULVEY, O.P.

MAN AND MORALS. By D. J. B. Hawkins. (Sheed and Ward; 10s. 6d.)

Here, in a hundred concise pages, with his usual reliability and practised style of exposition, Dr Hawkins offers the traditional version of 'morals without religion'. While the study of ethics does eventually disclose a certain incompleteness which points naturally to religion for its complement, religion is not the *basis* of ethics. The starting-point is the nature of man—it is round this point, in fact, that all moral argu-

ment turns: we should not expect to disagree much about morals once we had agreed about man.

The first two chapters are devoted to this cardinal issue and they are, unfortunately, by far the least impressive in the book. In other words, there will be little to criticize in the rest of the book if you find these chapters entirely convincing. But it is difficult to believe that they can be found so, really, even within the pale.

The fundamental concepts of the philosophy of psychology stand sorely in need of restatement and amplification. Until that is under way, there is little that can be said in morals or in metaphysics that will meet with general understanding, far less with some measure of agreement. The decision to be 'old-fashioned' in his approach, and his continued frosty disdain of existentialism and linguistic analysis, keep Dr Hawkins from confronting the problem of human destiny with anything like the resources, or the sense of urgency, that would be required, surely, to engage sustained creative attention at the present time.

One wonders, for example, how useful it really is to expound again, at comparative length, the famous doctrine of hylomorphism? The soul is indeed the form of the body; but as St Thomas pointed out in the *De Anima* this is, after all, a pretty sketchy description—extrinsic, superficial and incomplete, he says. Of course these words cannot be pressed very far. Nevertheless they may be allowed to indicate the kind of filling out, the enlargement and deepening of context and data, the *substance*, in fact, that must be imparted to our conception of man. The upshot of Dr Hawkins' discussion is that we exhibit a certain *depth*, which engenders our talking of ourselves as something more than animals—not a very disputable conclusion. It would be 'odd', he says, if we were simply to perish like animals—odd it may be, even *absurd*, but it is precisely this that most of our contemporaries dispute.

The oddness of man, one way or another, is evident enough. It is usual to tackle it in England by way of a critique of theories of knowledge—as Dr Hawkins does. But what appears in England as theory of knowledge is phenomenology of the body in France and Germany. Maurice Merleau-Ponty's book on perception, for example, bears witness in the most impressive and 'traditional' way to that human nature which it is so important for us to exhibit convincingly, and yet he refuses to entertain the realities of a Christian destiny. We must assimilate work like his, often lucid and deeply enlivening, with all its characteristic ambiguity, because we have to show how it is precisely that this ambiguity, and the oddness of man himself, evince the metaphysical implications about human nature which are the only basis of ethics. This will not be easy, but this is the kind of thing we must

attempt, and the only way that we can extend our morals to the comprehension of all men.

F.K.

MORAL PROBLEMS NOW. By George Hagmaier, C.S.P. and Robert W. Gleason, S.J. (Sheed and Ward; 21s.)

Most priests now realize that even the most normal people are conditioned physically and emotionally in their free choice; even without a knowledge of psychiatry, they must be aware of a distinction between man and angel which makes the absolute decision for good or evil of the latter impossible for the former. The fulness of responsibility sufficient for mortal sin does not need to carry with it that utterly exclusive adherence of the mind wholly intent upon an object coolly chosen as desirable which is characteristic of the pure spirit. On the other hand, psychiatrists—many of them Catholics—are not at all so ready as they once seemed to be to exclude all free will and regard man as wholly a being of instincts and urges. But priests are not always as willing as they ought to be to make use of these new insights. At best, many of them are considerate and kind to the sinner—from the highest motives—because they must be other Christs, ready to forgive as soon as there are signs of repentance. But after that, one penitent is much like another and more attention is paid to the objective character of the sin than to its subjective conditions.

Frankly, it is often difficult to do more. Even acting as a regular confessor in the same parish for years at a time, it is far from easy to discover the circumstances which would make it easier to advise about some particular weakness: a voice often gives little indication of the difference of age between seventeen and seventy, sometimes it is even difficult to know the sex. And even the regular, recognizable voices produce little evidence of the different ways of life which go a long way to explain why their owners admit more often than others a lack of charity. But if a little more is revealed in confession, or if a person summons up the courage to consult a priest outside confession, what is the priest to do? This book will help him.

He will learn above all to be patient, not to rush in with advice but to listen. And that is a great deal. But he will also learn to recognize the signs of strains and stresses that are really quite common even though to most of us they suggest extreme abnormality if not downright sin: sexual problems and alcoholism are the most obvious. Here, too, he can help greatly by merely listening; but he should be equipped to deal with the common problems, say, of masturbation in adolescence. He should be able to recognize when the problem is more acute, when he must pass on the penitent as a patient; but even then hopefully and with encouragement.