

REVIEWS
BOOK FOR THE MONTH

THE MIND AND HEART OF LOVE

THIS wonderful and infuriating book¹ aims at describing and drawing out the implications of what Fr D'Arcy takes to be the great two-way swing or oscillation of our nature between taking and giving, possession and sacrifice, self and God, essence (as he would say) and existence. He holds that basically the same rhythm is discernible wherever we turn and however far we gaze into the Universe, but he is concerned here only with its manifestations in Man and its religious meaning for Man. Drawing lavishly on his learning, especially in literature and psychology, he describes our souls and his own in terms of a double movement: inwards to the self, and this corresponds to the *essence* we possess and is revealed most in the life of reason or *animus* (p. 200); and outwards towards others, and this corresponds to 'the frail-as-gossamer hold on our nature which we call *existence*' and is revealed most in the life of desire springing from *anima*, which seems to be at once 'more intimately the self' than *animus* (p. 186) and closer to God, in the sense that it forever points towards him over the boundary of the self (in this sense, too, it seems to be *anima* that makes us aware of other *existing* things and persons, whereas *animus* or intellect as such, or at least as *human*, is unaware of existence, being limited to the knowledge and pursuit of abstract 'essences': pp. 186, 218, 280-2, 319-24; cf. 164, 204).

Before going further I note that Fr D'Arcy is a stylist. I do not merely mean that he takes trouble over his writing (as he evidently does); I mean as well that his presentation of any theme reflects a keen desire to get his readers on to his side. He is very concerned to make them 'benevolent', as the old books say, and in this old sense of the term he employs (in a quiet way) a good deal of rhetoric. To say this is to risk seeming impolite and even unfair, and indeed after reading and re-reading these fervent and animated pages with their frequent shrewdness and persistent charm, I more than ever shrink from treating them critically. The writer too is so intelligent that, in one sense, every objection has been forestalled. Still, certain objections can be raised which are worth stating; and Fr D'Arcy would be the first to recognize the rights of the pedestrian.

To start with, Fr D'Arcy's style with its rather studied ease, its

¹*The Mind and Heart of Love*, by M. C. D'Arcy. S.J. (Faber & Faber; 15s.)

persistent use of metaphor and above all its fluidity is an instrument on which one needs to keep a wary eye. As is the way with styles that keep close to the rhythm of speech it tends to prolixity. It constantly overflows. 'It is our misfortune that the divisions we are forced to make are too easily translated into a series of private properties, *each with sharp and fast boundaries*. Our very instincts and senses are impregnated with soul . . . and will overlap *in a most confusing way*. The picture we form of ourselves is convenient but . . . usually oversimplified *and too rigid*' (my italics, p. 163). Such recurrent additions are not only tiring in the long run, but, as this example shows, they do not even make the language any more precise. The metaphorical bent will be noted, and the rapid flow. Rapidity is of the essence of this style, expressing a continuous rapid *use* of ideas which are not thoroughly analysed. Reading Fr D'Arcy the mind is continually stirred and never really satisfied, because it is hurried over all the problems. Along with the frequent 'raciness' and metaphor this fluidity often lightens and vivifies his pages; but if he is free from the 'heavy clarity' which Dr Mathew notes in the prose of Acton, he does not always gain in clarity by losing weight.

This struck me particularly in the important chapter on Personality. Its dozen pages discuss a very difficult metaphysical issue, the nature of subsistence; and they are crammed with imagery. As I understand him, I am not convinced of the accuracy of Fr D'Arcy's analysis; but I doubt also whether I have understood it, and even were I convinced by it I should go on doubting whether any purpose is served by all this imagery. Since it has not helped me to understand him I cannot help wondering whether it was any use to Fr D'Arcy and not rather a hindrance. Cajetan no doubt is at the other extreme, but when he is quoted (p. 300) one hears the sort of language in which discussions of this kind had better, perhaps, be carried on even at the cost of putting off some readers. And here Fr D'Arcy's facility suddenly hardens into bluntness. The slip is revealing to anyone with an inkling of Cajetan's calibre as a metaphysician, and for the sake of such a reader I quote a few lines: 'Others maintain that as existence does no more than actualize what is already present, personality must precede this actualization of it. To suppose otherwise would be as absurd as to say that a bird in the hand was more of a bird than a bird in the bush. A man launched into existence is like a ship. The cable is cut and the ship glides down into the water. It is exactly the same ship after launching as before. Personality must therefore reside in the essence of the concrete human individual. What, then, is it? Cajetan says that it is that in the nature which makes the nature fit to have a substantial existence all its own. This, however,

seems to be a roundabout way of saying very little. What he says, however, becomes more intelligible if we understand him to mean that there is always, first, a fine point or tiny seed of distinctiveness, the 'I' which shows itself so individually in the behaviour of different babies', etc. Now without denying that Fr D'Arcy has grasped Cajetan's reason for saying what he says, though this is open to question, I deny his right to wave aside Cajetan's abstract terms and substitute ambiguous imagery of his own. To an attentive reader the latter must appear ambiguous because it might just as well have been used to express the quite different opinion of Suarez as stated on the previous page (p. 299). That opinion, in Fr D'Arcy's terms, made subsistence a 'kind of flush or flowering' added 'to the being which now (i.e. already) exists'. In metaphysics the two opinions are poles apart, but not in Fr D'Arcy's imagination: the images of 'point' and 'seed' would have done just as well in place of the 'flush or flowering'. Yet it is after all to Fr D'Arcy's imagination (apparently) that his readers must have recourse for the distinction between these opinions; since he has shied away from the abstract intellectual terms which alone, nevertheless, can accurately express it. The result can only be confusion.

It will be said that to press these and similar objections is to miss the point by assuming that Fr D'Arcy is writing science, whereas he has expressly refused to place his book under any *genre* (p. 16). It is like a fugue, he says. Obviously fugues are not proofs; nor then will this book attempt to prove anything except in the sense of showing that the dual love-movement is a general experience, and of setting it in the light of Christian teaching. The author tells us what he is aiming at and is well-equipped to take his readers with him. And no doubt many readers will not find his style distracting (as a part of the fugue) or even, as it seems to my taste sometimes, inappropriate (e.g. 'the nigger in the woodpile', p. 300). So long as the fugue is played, philosophy can stay in the 'background' (p. 274) where it has its uses.

Personally I am repelled by the notion of using philosophy as a 'background', of abstracting from the *truth* of a given system in order to use it as 'material for reflection' (pp. 274, 248). If, having made this abstraction, one still retains a distinct theory about love, then one's further interest in philosophy, as it bears on this subject, will be purely a matter of taste or convenience. As Fr D'Arcy writes: 'St Augustine found the Platonic [system] very suitable for some of his favourite ideas on love; others have found Duns Scotus to their taste' (p. 248). Incidentally, I very much doubt whether St Augustine really did use philosophy, in Fr D'Arcy's way, as a sort of detach-

able background; his ideas, I fancy, were firmly knit together by their own logic.

The danger of rhetoric (in even the best sense) is that it tends to reflect the prejudices of the reader. The modern prejudice is against the notion of a scientific theology or, even, philosophy; and this is natural enough if, as Pius XI¹ said, theology gets its scientific character precisely from that scholastic philosophy to which the modern mind is largely hostile. If this is a bad prejudice it is a pity to encourage it, even when one is not writing scientific theology. But it is encouraged by a certain 'anti-intellectualism' (a hateful term, but convenient); and such, I feel, has left its trace on these pages. That curious detached 'use' of philosophy—is not that what is meant by eclecticism? And Fr D'Arcy's way of referring to the intellect as 'dwelling among essences and never among existences' (p. 186)²; as 'egocentric' and 'self-regarding', as 'by-passing existence' and 'living in abstractions', as 'paralysing the living reality before it can make it its own', etc., is a far cry from St Thomas, to whom intellect represented life at its most intense, and for whom the abstracting power of the human intellect was a power at once of enlivening the real and of seizing, latent in it, the trace of God called truth.

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THE MISSIONS

LE FONDEMENT THEOLOGIQUE DES MISSIONS. Par Henri de Lubac. (Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1946.)

Father de Lubac in his most recent work demonstrates that the missionary activity of the Church is essential to her nature. The Catholicism of the Church is not just an empiric fact but an essential note by which the tension between the national cult and the service of God, the Creator, which lay at the heart of Jewish religion, is resolved.

In Christ the wall—all walls—of division are broken down and in him dreams of apocalyptic kingdoms and expedients such as that of the proselytes of the gate are both refuted and transcended. The Church, the mystical body of Christ, is compelled both by the command of the risen Lord and her constitution in charity, to pour forth the fullness of life on all people.

In the second half of his book Father de Lubac refutes a number of objections to missionary work outside Europe. A work which, following Père Charles, he holds to be specified by the goal of establishing the visible Church throughout the world.

The theological objections raised by Luther and Calvin have little

¹ Epist. Apost. *Officiorum Omnium*; August, 1922.

² In the context this might represent just a common opinion; but it seems, from other texts, to express Fr D'Arcy's own view (cf. pp. 279-81, 319-20, 204.)