

sent structures of the Church. Resignation follows disillusionment. For the other third, the priesthood still had meaning in the present circumstances: 'for them it is no very great matter to part company with an ecclesial order divorced from life, in which there is no place for a married man to hold office' (p. 34). The writers seem to make good use of the data available, but it is only a beginning to the analysis of a complex problem.

The other two sections of the book relate specifically to the celibacy issue. In the chapter on the 'Married Priest', L. C. M. Meijers explains the background to the papal edicts of the eleventh century strictly enforcing celibacy as a universal requirement for the priesthood in the Western Church. The influence of monasticism, especially that of Cluny, on the reform of the ordinary priestly life instituted at this period is well known. Both Gregory VII and Urban II had been monks at Cluny. This proscription against married clergy culminated in the provision of the second Lateran Council (in the next century) that those who received

the higher orders were incapable of contracting a valid marriage.

Less well known than this extension of monastic asceticism to the ordinary clergy is the secular problem with which married clergy faced the Church at this time. In the feudal society that grew out of the dark ages they posed a problem which could not have arisen in any other age. This problem was the attempt by married priests to dispose of Church property as their own inheritance and even to regard their office as inheritable, as a kind of private franchise, so typical of an age which tended to treat public offices as private property.

It was against this kind of abuse that the 'canonists found an appropriate weapon against inheritance of ecclesiastical offices and property in the provision that a priest's marriage was null and void' (p. 43).

Perhaps the most important point made by the book is this: 'if it is becoming a normal thing for priests to resign, that should tell us more about the church itself than about the priests in question' (p. 2). JOAN BROTHERS

CHILDREN UNDER STRESS, by Sula Wolff. *Allen Lane The Penguin Press*, London, 1969. 248 pp. 42s.

THE PREVENTION OF DAMAGING STRESS IN CHILDREN. A Report edited by Jonathan Gould. *J. & A. Churchill Ltd*, 1968, 156 pp. 21s.

CHILDREN IN DISTRESS, by Sir Alec Clegg and Barbara Megson. *Penguin Books Ltd*, 1968, 175 pp. 4s.

In her important book, Dr Sula Wolff describes the main reasons for stress in children—illness and going into hospital, bereavement, illegitimacy, family disruption, the neurotic family, cultural deprivation, constitutional disorders and mental illness. The Report edited by Dr Jonathan Gould for presentation to the 7th International Congress for Mental Health, London, August 1968, recognizes the same stressful situations and vulnerable children, with chapters and suggested remedies by doctors, psychiatrists and social workers. Dr Wolff was one of the contributors to the original study group that compiled the report.

Children in Distress by Sir Alec Clegg and his administrative assistant deals with children under stress as revealed by, and dealt with or neglected by, the educational system in the West Riding of Yorkshire where Sir Alec has been Chief Education Officer since 1945. His findings have relevance for the country as a whole.

The Report estimates a risk-rate of damaging stress (excluding delinquency) of nearly 10 per cent of our children, and comments that although the number is not overwhelming it seems to be on the increase and 'the problem

touches at the moment at least one million of our children under fourteen years of age'. Sir Alec puts the figure a little higher at 12 per cent. By distress he means 'children who are often wretchedly unhappy because of the strain put upon them at home'. He estimates that in the West Riding some 5,000 children receive curative help, but a further 25,000-30,000 need preventive help and receive very little of it. 'Much more should be done to tackle behaviour problems the moment they are detected in the incipient stage of distress rather than waiting until the courts compel some more urgent action.'

Dr Wolff's theme is illustrated with case-histories, Sir Alec's with scores of trenchant comments from teachers and others dealing with children in school. One head wrote: 'I have spent hours with him and am no nearer getting through the barrier that has been created than I was two years ago.' An infants' headmistress said: 'Of the nineteen children admitted in September there were eight who could not fit red to a red jersey or blue to a blue bead. . . . For some, communication by speech is an art to be acquired in school, toilet training has not been established, and the

handling of cutlery needs to be taught.'

Dr Wolff shows that psychiatric disorders in children can be caused either by this kind of inadequate socialization, which is often associated with parental and cultural deprivation; or by experiences of overwhelming anxiety. To recognize and to provide speedy help for children under stress achieves a dual purpose—the relief of present anxieties and the prevention of personality defects later in life. Dr Wolff provides a useful outline of normal child development and symptom formation which parents as well as teachers, nurses, doctors, social workers and even magistrates will find useful. As Consultant Psychiatrist at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Edinburgh she is in daily contact with children in hospital, psychiatric clinics and child guidance clinics. Of those children brought for psychiatric help in the country as a whole, Dr Wolff estimates that 80 per cent are reacting with deviant behaviour to upsetting life experiences in the past or present. Twenty per cent are constitutionally handicapped or have suffered gross early deprivations. She makes many recommendations for handling children undergoing stress.

On bereavement she says: 'People shy away from mentioning the dead for fear of upsetting his survivors', but the outward expression and discussion of grief is essential for the bereaved. 'How can a widowed mother help her child with his feelings about the loss of his father if she has not been able to deal adequately with her own?'

About hospitals, Dr Wolff believes that a scientific exploration of the effects of illness on children's emotional development has been delayed largely because nurses and doctors have not been trained to cope with a sick child's distress otherwise than by a massive denial of its significance. She and the writers of the

Report recommend special training and continued psychiatric support for all hospital staff dealing with sick children, using perhaps the inter-disciplinary discussion group used first so effectively by Michael Balint for G.P.s in London.

The professional training group and in-service training could also be used for teachers and all residential child-care staff. Seventy per cent of staff in children's homes have no formal qualifications for the job. People who care for children 'at risk' need psychological skills. Common sense and kindness are not enough with which to detect, far less treat, symptoms of stress or distress.

Within the educational system Dr Wolff would welcome changes in actual teaching techniques so that the teachers of less able, socially deprived children, were better able to foster satisfaction in place of frustration. In the 'good' schools Sir Alec Clegg found that children who were in their own eyes succeeding were normally contented and well behaved. The more the cane was used, the more delinquent the school became and conversely. Dr Wolff recommends experimental investigations to see if administrative changes could prevent specific psychiatric disorders. Boys, for instance, have more overt behaviour problems than girls. Women teachers—often with a middle-class background—evaluate boys, especially those with a working-class background, negatively. Children adopt the characteristics expected of them.

Sir Alec Clegg argues that children under stress should be noticed and helped in school. Dr Wolff and the Report authors would supplement this with more psychological skills for doctors, nurses, residential child care staff as well as teachers and all other professional people whose job it is to cherish our children.

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