

more useful, perhaps, because it enables them to learn when they are, in fact, facing such people. Dr Dobbelstein illustrates the sad results brought about when priests do not recognize the symptoms that call for a psychiatrist.

But the value of *Psychiatry for Priests* does not only lie in its technical accomplishment; for the author's own deep religious convictions prevent us from losing the sense of the sacredness of all the human beings he discusses—no matter how hopeless, idiotic and meaningless their lives may appear in the eyes of the mere technician. The only part of the book which made me feel unhappy is the title. It might give the impression that the book is a priest's short-cut to psychiatry; the original German title did not allow such ambiguity.

D.N.

DAS MÄDCHEN VON ORLÉANS. By Sven Stolpe. Introduction by Ida Friederike Gorus. (Verlag Josef Knecht; n.p.)

Those who know of Sven Stolpe as a leading Swedish novelist and convert to the Faith may be a little surprised at the appearance of a work by him in German on St Joan of Arc. The answer is that he has long been fascinated by the story of St Joan, and that Oswald von Nostitz rightly considered the story he tells worthy of translation from the Swedish.

Rarely do we come across an author with such a combination of qualities for holding the reader's interest as he threads his way through complex questions of historical evidence, psychological theory and the workings of grace. To begin with, Stolpe has the true novelist's capacity for evoking scenes and atmospheres and plunging his reader into them. With his very first words we find ourselves beside him in a drowsy library down the Rhône valley, till almost without knowing it we are back in the same valley during the bloody, cruel, superstitious years of the early fifteenth century. And Domrémy is as familiar to us as an English village. This same power of evocation is again displayed in his description of St Joan's part in the battle of Patay—how in the midst of the slaughter she swung herself from her horse to protect a dying English soldier, holding him in her arms, calling a priest for him, and consoling his last moments. Such deeds, as Stolpe reflects, make up the stuff of history; usually, however, they go unmarked by historians and will remain unmarked until the last judgment.

But Stolpe does not succumb to the temptation so insistent in a person with his imaginative intensity, that of side-stepping critical questions. On the contrary, he wrestles manfully with Cordier's skilful debunking work, *Jeanne d'Arc, sa personnalité, son rôle*, and emerges the victor in St Joan's cause. And in the course of doing so he provides

answers to the perennial questions raised by St Joan's life: why did she continue to dress as a man? When did she disobey the 'voices'? What effect did she really have on the military situation? etc.

It is because he works most carefully over these preliminary questions that Stolpe is so convincing in the last section of his book, which gives a detailed account of her capture, imprisonment, trial and death. Already, before we arrive at this last act, the athletic, impulsive, racy village girl that she was has taken on flesh and blood, so that we find no difficulty in understanding her reactions—not even her denial of the 'voices'. And for a twentieth-century reader there is something uncanny in the resemblances between the techniques of persecution applied to Joan and those now being applied in our own day. If commissars were subscribers to *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT* one would recommend them to read this book for their salvation; the same goes for ecclesiastics and Senators.

Finally, Stolpe tells us that he has written a supplementary work to this one, on the crisis within research on St Joan. It would be good to have it in English.

DONALD NICHOLL

*THE BASIS OF THE MYSTICISM OF ST THOMAS.* By Fr Conrad Pepler, O.P. (Aquinas Paper No. 21. Blackfriars Publications; 2s.)

The impact of Tresmontant's study, *La pensée hébraïque*, upon the mind of Fr Pepler is writ large in this recent Aquinas Paper. And for this we are duly grateful, since Tresmontant has neatly summarized the antithesis to Hebrew thought presented by the conceptual procedure of the Greeks, and has shown how the most vital modern thought is breaking loose from Greek abstractions to enjoy that concrete knowledge of individuals so beloved of the Hebrews. Fr Pepler has applied Tresmontant's findings to the teaching of St Thomas Aquinas to show that St Thomas's mysticism is grounded in the Scriptures, and is thereby closely related to the Hebrew modes which dominate the Scriptures. St Thomas's teaching on this subject has been neglected, he maintains, because 'his successors, instead of following in his footsteps and developing to the full the thomistic principles of mystical union in the Word of God, ignored the virgin soil that he had ploughed and either continued to cultivate the deceptively lush platonic plains or began to dash across the whole land fascinated by the mechanical perfection of their new scholastic tractors'. The villain of the piece is platonic idealism in combat with the Aristotelian realism stated by St Thomas, the latter being 'the best tool for penetrating to the Spirit of the Bible and so tasting of the heights of mysticism more securely'.

But, as Tresmontant points out (p. 33), Aristotle was as Greek as they