

CONFLICT AND LIGHT (Sheed and Ward, 10s. 6d.) is a translation effectively made from *Trouble et Lumière*, one of the Etude Carmelitaine series edited by Père Bruno, O.C.D.

The work is composed of a number of lectures delivered by priests and psychiatrists in conference over the problem of guilt as seen in the confessional and in the consulting room. As the contributors are experts in their respective fields and are talking to each other, the tone of the lectures, their terminology and their content are such that only those with some psychological knowledge will fully appreciate the richness of their material.

There are two parts to the book. In the first part there is an analysis of sin and of guilt. Mgr Journet begins this discussion with an analysis of sin as human fault and as offence against an Infinite God, the ontological malice of which can only best be seen in the perspective of the redemptive death of Christ. Fr Beirnaert continues the analysis by arguing that sin exists only when there is at least an implicit recognition of God—a somewhat doubtful premiss, for it would excuse the atheist who explicitly refuses to accept God from the practice of the moral law, and some atheists have been renowned for their respectability. Three psychiatrists then contribute their valuable clinical experience on the relative strength of the unconscious formulating a false sense of guilt. Dr Dolto describes the formation of false conscience in childhood through faulty adult teaching, and Professor Allers in his paper on Psychological Aspects of Confession warns us that from the nature of things no confessor can take on the role of psychiatrist, as indeed no consulting-room can ever replace the confessional. Père Philippe finally reminds us of the necessity for jurists and moralists to accept the findings of psychopathology when they are called upon to judge a neurotic penitent.

The main message of this first part is that false guilt is a disintegrating canker which destroys personality; but true guilt, once it is accepted, recognised and offered to God in Christ, liberates fresh powers of action and occasions joy among the angels of God.

In the second part a Consultor of the Congregation of Rites establishes what are the objective norms of holiness which the Church seeks in the process of Beatification. The life of God's servant is seen as a whole and it appears in authentic cases that there is an extraordinary harmony and perfection in the humanity and in the psychological and spiritual integrity of the *Beatus*. Piety, says Gustave Thibon in another paper, means love of God transcendent and love of God immanent in his creation, and who, he asks, has a greater appreciation of the beauty of the world than John of the Cross? If we feel that there is impurity in things, then it means that our hearts are projecting their impurity upon reality. Thus, says Père Lucien Marie, we must follow the example of St John of the

Cross and restore hierarchy in our souls, put our spiritual house in order, and we shall find in this discipline, where love and charity cast out fear and guilt, that 'this life is a blessed one, like to that of the estate of innocence wherein all the harmony and ability of man's sensual part served him for greater recreation and as a help to a knowledge and love of God in peace and concord with his higher part'. (*Spirit. Cant.*)

ALAN KEENAN, O.F.M.

OF THE IMITATION OF CHRIST. Translated by Abbot Justin McCann. (Burns Oates; from 8s. 6d.)

THE IMITATION OF CHRIST. A new translation by Leo Sherley-Price. (Penguin Classics; 2s. 6d.)

Two new versions bring a famous book before another generation of readers. Abbot McCann's has the usual form of the book of devotion—black binding, cross on cover—but is distinguished by the convenience of its shape and size and the clarity of its print. The translation is a new rendering which abolishes much of what the Penguin translator calls 'pseudo-Jacobean'; as, for example, the use of the second person singular unless when addressing God (though there is a passage in III, 6 where the devil is addressed as 'thou'). The text is divided into the now traditional sections, and there is a practical index. A short Preface gives some account of A Kempis and his work. (It seems to be implied that Gerard Groote was a priest. He remained a deacon.) It is a very nice edition.

The second version is in the familiar form of a Penguin book and the translator (who writes from H.M.S. *Indefatigable*) defines his purpose as 'to provide an accurate, unabridged, and readable modern translation'. The second person singular goes altogether, so does the division into sections. There is a sensible Introduction, which includes what used to be called the 'argument' of the books and relates them to the three classical 'ways' of the spiritual life. This neo-Elizabethan version should appeal to those who come fresh to the book, and it is always interesting. But perhaps one short passage will show that the often deceptive simplicity of the original is not easily matched. The Latin has: 'Quia post hiemem sequitur aestas, post noctem redit dies, et post tempestatem magna serenitas' (II, 8); for which we have: 'for after winter comes summer, night turns to day, and after a storm comes fair weather'. The meaning is there, of course; but something more than the rhythm has been lost with 'redit'. Some renderings are unusual; for example, taken at random, 'respect the knowledge that is entrusted to you' (I, 2) for 'potius time de data tibi notitia'; or, 'whoever loves God knows well the sound of His voice' (III, 5), where 'vox clamat' seems surely to anticipate the 'magnus clamor' of the next sentence. (By the way, a sentence has slipped out in XXI, 1.). But it is ill picking holes in a work that was so well worth doing and so well done.

A. E. H. SWINSTEAD