

gius' successor Abbot Nikon. St. Sergius, however unknowingly, stood by the source of the movement he has come to symbolise. It was a long journey from the wooden shrine at Makovka to the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius; but at least the journey was continuous.

Historically, the Russian contribution to Christian spirituality would seem to be a variant of the Byzantine. But it is a variant that is specifically distinct. Centrally Russian conceptions, *sobornost*, or that sense of the community *obitchina*, seem to stand in the same relation to the cosmic perspective of the Byzantine theologians and their overwhelmingly corporate sense as Russian religious painting to Byzantine iconography. In both cases the pattern remains the same, but quite suddenly there is a rhythm. There are the same motifs, but they are no longer static; the preconception of an immobile world order has vanished. The parallel is perhaps inevitable for the conventions of religious art only become intelligible in terms of the schools of spirituality which find expression in them, and a human approach to spiritual realities may be differentiated by the presuppositions of contrasted cultures. The theology, the mysticism, the art of fourteenth century Byzantium alike presuppose an ancient and secure civilization, curiously patterned, specialised in its perceptions. They were the expression of a belief in an intelligible order and an immobile sovereignty as the inevitable reflections of the Divine Wisdom among men. They were transplanted into the fluctuating and enigmatic life of the small Russian principalities still in the first aftermath of the Tartar dominance. The new Russian religious culture, first clearly apparent in the late fourteenth century school of Novgorod, is the effect of their transplanting.

The new movement would seem to have been only gaining momentum in the last years of St. Sergius's life. It is possible that he was unaffected by it. But it is not unfitting that he should be chosen as its symbol, for his work of monastic reorganisation provided the medium which assured its triumph. While both as a symbol and as an individual he can serve to emphasize the underlying unity of so much medieval Christian spirituality, for as both he is primarily a monk.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

NERVOUS MENTAL DISEASES. THEIR PASTORAL TREATMENT.

By Chrysostomus Schulte, O.M.Cap. Translated by  
Clarence Tschippert, O.M.Cap. (Coldwell; 10s. 6d.)

The pastoral treatment of the mentally afflicted calls for much

skill and patience on the part of the confessor. They need spiritual help and guidance, since in spite of their affliction they often present valuable qualities, but their life is a burden to themselves and often to others, not least to the priest.

Though moral theologians as a rule have treated of scruples and the scrupulous conscience, there is a need for revision of this subject in the light of modern psychiatry. This treatise will therefore be welcomed as a valuable guide to confessors and others having to deal with individuals who may in general terms be described as psychopathic, and who though afflicted mentally in various ways often present strong religious impulses and torments of conscience. The author has had a life-long experience in dealing with such cases, and in this treatise gives us the benefit thereof.

Psychopathics are of various kinds. Compulsive and depressive neuroses, acute anxieties, hysteria, abulia, and so forth. As regards the purpose of this treatise, these are adequately described both in regard to their origins and symptoms, and to each type an appropriate spiritual and educative treatment is suggested by way of guidance. The suggestions are not to be applied, however, in a routine way. Each individual case has to be considered separately.

Special emphasis is laid on pastoral treatment, which must necessarily differ from medical treatment; hence co-operation with a dependable psychiatrist is also called for. Nevertheless, the pastoral treatment can have far-reaching therapeutic effects, since the contact between patient and priest may be closer than that with the doctor.

It will be seen that as regards the priest, special training in psychiatry is required; as well as personal qualifications for treating patients. Though not all priests and confessors could have either the training or the qualifications necessary, nevertheless this book will be of great service to many, not only as a guide to the forms of mental illness, but also to the difficulties attending the handling of such cases as are herein described and the extreme care which must be taken.

Among the various types of psychopathics, hysterics and the unstable or 'abulics' are perhaps the more frequently encountered and present the greatest difficulties in regard to treatment. The description of the hysterical character is especially valuable.

With regard to the problem of the moral responsibility of the neurotic, the author takes a lenient view, pointing out that we must beware of the view that moral delinquency in one form

or another is at the bottom of all psychopathy. The graver the disease the less is moral responsibility involved. He does not, however, go so far as to exclude sin entirely as a source, in some cases of psychopathy.

As has been said already, this treatise is the outcome of wide personal experience over a number of years, and is independent of theories of a psychoanalytic or other nature. In a field where much diversity of opinion and theory prevails, this plain non-technical exposition of facts is very welcome.

AIDAN ELINGTON, O.P.

THE DARK WHEEL. By S.M.C. (Sands; 6s.)

The author of *Brother Petroc's Return*, which had so well-deserved a success, has now given us a still more finished and still more important novel. *The Dark Wheel*, like its predecessor, asks credence for an unusual play with time, which once granted, the sequence of the story follows with masterly and compelling logic; for in both books there is a well-developed theological theme skilfully clothed in most interesting narrative. But from every angle *The Dark Wheel* shows a notable advance in technique on the part of the author. Brother Petroc's return to human intercourse depends upon four hundred years of suspended animation, a phantasy remote from possibility yet somehow easy of acceptance. But in the revolving of the Dark Wheel, Greville White, a modern professional man and an atheist who has suffered a breakdown from overwork, is carried through the tenuous veil that separates time from eternity in such fashion that from the Cornish garden whither he has betaken himself for a much-needed rest he sets out upon a strange journey through what can best be described as vignettes of time beginning in pre-Reformation days.

The notion of the re-enacting of by-gone scenes in the ever-present *now* of eternity, for the benefit of one who has been permitted by God to penetrate the veil of time while yet he lives in this sublunar world, opens a fascinating and by no means unprofitable line of speculation. The author presents it with a simplicity and sureness of touch that is characteristic of the whole book. The strange pilgrimage and gradual conversion of the hero is etched in with deft lines and a great sympathy; and in the course of it deep Catholic truths are expounded with the ability of a theologian and the finished technique of the experienced novelist, though the author is professionally neither the one nor the other. (Perhaps it is not indiscreet to reveal