

thing to hasten a cure (there was a cure). In the second case, of an older person, plainly dying, the tubes seemed an obscenity, the pointless invasion of an unswervingly honest man's dignity. Thanks to Trowell I now know the tubes were not necessarily pointless. Why was I not told at the time? More importantly, why was the patient not told? Elsewhere, Trowell tells how important information was gratuitously withheld from the dying J B S Haldane (not a man to be baffled by a few medical polysyllables anyway), but fails to connect this apparent medical contempt for the vulgar—as he usefully might—with the vulgar's desire, which he deprecates elsewhere, to have professionals institutionally licensed to do their dubious work (euthanasia, torture, killing 14-year-old Irishmen . . .?) for them.

Chapter V, 'Psychological Aspects' considers how patients, especially cancer patients, react to being told that they are dying: it is then that the declaration envisaged by the 1969 Bill would be made. Voluntary euthanasia demands a rational, steady, informed desire for death. This is usually impossible in the changing moods and denials of the terminal state of cancer. 'Changing moods and denials' is right. Also 'the cancer patient may be habituated to narcotic drugs and stuporous from sedative drugs. All this would make it difficult, if not impossible, for him to make a valid decision about euthanasia'. That is too strong: by what right does Trowell demand more steadiness etc. for the voluntary declaration authorising euthanasia than is required for making a valid will, or for being responsible for murder? In effect, the one is just as legal, the other no less **GOD'S WAY TO BE MAN** by Geoffrey Preston O.P. Darton, Longman & Todd, 1978 pp. 105 £2.40.

Long standing readers of *New Blackfriars* will know that Geoffrey Preston O.P. who died suddenly in 1977 when sadly only 41, wrote many articles for this journal. Yet oddly for a man of his literary and theological talents, he published no books. The many and various admirers of Geoffrey Preston's style of preaching and lecturing, who benefited from his easy and lucid touch and rich theological acumen, will welcome this posthumous publication of what read like retreat conferences to a religious community on the theme of fol-

irrevocable. Chapter VI claims to examine in detail four recent essays on 'the principle of voluntary euthanasia. Not all the essays are examined thoroughly enough, yet point after point shows them to lack nuance, sometimes crucially. A contention worth considering: 'the question whether a person has a right to die has a smirking insincerity concealed in its euphemistic phraseology . . . it is really an argument about whether one has a right to get someone else to do the killing; and that someone a doctor who will cast a cloak of respectability, if not anonymity, over the whole act'. Chapter VII is largely a *stretto* in which elements already stated return. Four appendices give the 1971 BMA report, the V.E.S. reply, the 1969 Bill, and a suggested declaration of a wish not for euthanasia but for being 'allowed to die and not kept alive by (any? or just "extraordinary"?) artificial means in specified circumstances. There is no index and the "footnotes", at the end as *in vase indedito*, are hard to consult.

Dr Trowell sometimes puts his arguments in ways that irritate a philosophical purist, and other petty slips occasionally show (e.g. 'in Scotland a woman was found guilty of manslaughter' cannot be right: the law knows no crime under that name). I dutifully register these trifling reservations. Dr Trowell's valuable and sensitive book is full of arresting considerations. I warmly commend it—especially for those of us who are more inclined to the nice than to the good in moral discussions. More than one important debate on euthanasia is far from being finished.

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owing Christ through a meditation on the Sacraments.

Much praise and thanks is due to Aidan Nichols, O.P. for choosing and editing these texts because many of the ingredients that made Geoffrey an outstanding and inspiring preacher are contained here; the extraordinary breadth and weight of his reading and knowledge, (*pace* the editor, Geoffrey lived not in a *cell* but in a *library*), which enabled him in his preaching to call on so many sources, ancient and modern, religious and secular, (many of

them cleverly tracked down by Aidan Nichols). Here too is demonstrated his love of Scripture and the uncanny gift he had for showering fresh light on some all too familiar text. His jocularly and facility for self-mockery of his famous fatness: in Baptism we 'put on' Christ. "It may be more helpful to think not so much of putting on an overcoat as of putting on weight, for it is the latter that makes such a difference to one's personality" (p. 18).

Geoffrey Preston's 'style' was indefatigably Christ-centred and Incarnational, and for that reason the title of the book is neat and very Geoffrey-like; similar phrases occur constantly throughout the text: Jesus is 'God's way of being human', following Jesus is 'being human in God's way' etc. God's way to be Man is the man Jesus, and so Christianity is very much a matter of the flesh, blood and sinews of human history. This conviction lies at the root of his vision that to understand 'God's way to be Man' as revealed in the sacraments, we should meditate, not on the small-minded performance that most of them receive, but on their celebration in their fullness. So the richness of the love of God for sinners revealed in the sacrament of forgiveness, for example, can best be understood in the rite for Maundy Thursday in the Roman Pontifical when "the bishop is to preside at a moving ceremony that culminates in a dance of the newly-restored penitents into the church from which they were debarred on Ash Wednesday" (p. 42). Somehow that observation is typical of his approach to liturgy. Not for him the pusillanimous, making-do of so much liturgical performance, whether it was a full scale sumptuous ceremonial or making Eucharist on a kitchen table with a small group of Christians, he always maximised the liturgical symbolism.

Again, because for him the Gospel is to do with flesh and blood human history, Christianity could never become 'spiritualised' or apolitical. Some of this emerges in his beautiful meditation on the bread and wine symbolism of the Eucharist. Com-

menting on the bread 'which human hands have made' he says: "Think of the conditions in which human hands have made bread in our own country and throughout the world. Think of the domination, exploitation and pollution of man and nature that goes with bread, all the bitterness and competition and class struggle, all the organised selfishness of tariffs and price rings, all the wicked oddity of a world distribution that brings plenty to some and malnutrition to others, bringing them to that symbol of poverty which we call the bread line. . . . If we bring bread and wine to the Lord's Table, we are implicating ourselves . . . in the sorrow as well as the joy of the world" (p. 84).

Choosing and editing these texts and adding an Introductory Sketch has clearly been a labour of love by Aidan Nichols. I'm sure Geoffrey would have welcomed and applauded the choice of texts. I'm not sure what he would have made of the introductory sketch. I guess he would have cast a frown of rueful glumness at some of it; the ponderous, inane, Times-Obituary tone of "It made of him almost, but not quite, a great man". And I guess he would have cackled hilariously at the hagiographic schmaltz of comparing him to a wild flower of the brief Arctic Summer: "Such vulnerability, and such godly beauty". Nor can I think of Geoffrey, (as one of his brethren seems to have done), as 'occupying an armchair with the air of a beached whale, a rosary in his fingers'. Anyone who has witnessed the lumpy and futile sadness of a beached whale, (even with a rosary in his fingers), could never apply that metaphor to Geoffrey Preston—look at his photograph on the frontispiece!

There are a lot of typographical errors, the more serious of which are 'hart' not 'heart' on p. 54; 'depend' not 'deepen' on p. 73; I think 'not' is missing in the text on p. 92, line 24 between 'was' and 'founded'. Many will want more of Geoffrey Preston's work published. Let us hope this will be possible.

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