

REVIEWS

CATHOLIC SOCIAL PRINCIPLES. By John F. Cronin (Bruce Publishing Company, Wilwaukee; \$6.)

The author of this book is Assistant Director of the Department of Social Action, National Welfare Conference, an agency under the direct control of the United States hierarchy; he has already written on 'Economic Analysis and Problems', and 'Catholic Social Action', and is thus well equipped to deal with his subject-matter. Although the sub-title is 'The Social Teaching of the Catholic Church applied to American economic life', and although American conditions bulk large in the book, its interest is far from being merely local. The principles it lays down, as also many of the rules governing their application, are of universal value, whilst the discussion of different points of view put forward in the United States will, at least, give us authentic information about American conditions and of the reactions to them of Catholic thinkers.

The book falls into three parts. The first deals with the Christian social order; the second with social principles in economic life; whilst the third part treats of Catholic social thought in America. Each chapter is prefaced by the relevant passages from papal documents, and those emanating from the hierarchies of different countries. The papal texts are not merely drawn from the great social Encyclicals, but quote also from the various allocutions, principally of Pius XII and his immediate predecessor, in which the doctrine of the encyclicals is explained and developed. This feature alone makes the book a most valuable instrument of study. Another useful feature is furnished by the reading lists bearing on each chapter; a very large number of works is listed with a brief assessment of the content and value of each. As one would expect, the majority of these books are of American origin, but a considerable number of European works also finds a place. There is, too, besides a good index, a table of correlation between the different authoritative documents and the chapters and paragraphs of the book in which they are quoted and explained. The value of such a book as something more than an excellent work of reference will evidently depend on the way in which the material is organised and on the spirit which pervades the discussions and, to some extent, dictates the conclusions. The author is quite independent in his views, and shows great judgment in avoiding the excesses of the extremists; one feels that he is not so much making out a case for some pre-conceived theory as endeavouring to form a balanced judgment on the data given. We think that much of his success is due to the stress he lays on the much neglected virtue of legal justice, and on his recognition of the duty of the moralist to make himself

acquainted with the complexity of modern conditions and, where necessary, to modify his conclusions accordingly.

The first part considers in successive chapters the rise of the social problem, the attitude of the Church thereto and the scope of her social teaching; man and economic life; the social virtues, unsound philosophies of economic life (individualism, continental socialism and non-communist statism); communism, and lastly, the ideal social order according to Catholic teaching. Some parts of the sections on socialism and communism may appear somewhat slight, but the essential is there, and for a more detailed study the student can always have recourse to the reading lists. The ideal social order is an organic society which combines independence and co-operation. Men should be organised not merely in terms of what separates them, e.g. Capital and Labour, but in terms of what unites them, e.g. this or that type of enterprise. Such organisation would be complex and could exist at the levels of the factory, the industry and the national and international economic systems. It should spring into being, under the fostering and co-ordinating influence of the state, from the common functions in the socio-economic sphere. These functional societies would be self-governing, but subordinated to similar societies at a higher level, and ultimately to the state, in so far, but only in so far, as the common good of the community requires. The Americans, feeling that the expressions 'guild' and 'corporative society' had unfortunate associations in men's minds, have called them 'industry councils', although, of course, they are not restricted to industry alone. It should be pointed out that they would not eliminate, but supplement free associations like trade unions and employer associations. The application of this papal doctrine to American conditions is explained in detail, with special reference to the difficult problems of price-fixing, with its implications, according to many, of total economic control by the industry councils of production, investment and profits. Catholic writers in the United States have come down heavily on the side of total control, thus arousing much opposition to papal ideas among non-Catholics; the author agrees with the arguments put forward against such total control—a good example of his independent and sound judgment.

The second part deals with the following important points of detail: rights and duties of Capital, rights and duties of Labour, the living wage and full employment, trade unions, property, the state in economic life, the Church and social reform. To take only one or two instances from the three hundred odd pages to which the second part runs, the very careful analysis of what exactly constitutes the profits of an enterprise could be read with advantage by many who class as profits any difference between the retail price and the price of the raw materials involved, and no less by those who try so to manipulate their figures that the

actual real profit they make is unreasonable and unjust. Or again, the wise words of warning about the condemnation of big business *en bloc*, 'persons are won over through the discussion of problems and the acquiring of conviction that a sound middle-way between individualism and statism must be found. But they are alienated by blanket indictments of their group, the more so if they are convinced that these charges are unfair and largely unfounded.' (p. 301.) Catholic writers are all too often inclined to forget how much and how many abuses have already been corrected.

The third part of the work deals with American Catholic social thought. Beginning with the statements of the hierarchy and discussing various movements in the social field among Catholic thinkers, it ends with a final chapter on social principles and social action, the task of the Church in training clergy and laity so as to influence American economic life and to bring about a sound reorganisation of society in conformity with Catholic teaching. English readers will be interested in the author's critique of distributism. Whilst in full sympathy with its objective, namely the safeguarding of freedom through the widespread diffusion of productive property, the author does not think that because machine production and city life are currently surrounded by abuses, they are therefore inherently wrong. He takes his stand by the existing economic order with a view to informing it with Catholic principles. 'It might be correct to note a distributist tendency in the addresses of Pope Pius XII. But when the remedial programme of many distributists is examined, one does not find the moderation and care which are characteristic of the Papal programmes. The Church seeks a revolutionary change in society, but its methods are gradual and evolutionary.' (p. 642.) It will be realised that this is a book which all interested in these important matters should read and ponder. Some, no doubt, will find many of the author's conclusions over-conservative, but they will at least learn to know and appreciate the reasons on which such conclusions are based, and even if they are not convinced, will acquire a more balanced view of the matter in hand. From what has been said it should be clear why the publishers can claim it to be 'one of the most valuable books of our times'.

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PSYCHIATRY AND CATHOLICISM. By James H. VanderVeldt, O.F.M., Ph.D., and Robert P. Odenwald, M.D., F.A.P.A. Foreword by the Archbishop of Washington, D.C. (New York: McGraw-Hill; \$6.00.)

The somewhat vague title of this book hardly indicates its character or importance. In fact the book goes a very long way to meet the urgent need for a general, comprehensive handbook on contemporary psychiatry written by Catholics for Catholics and from a Catholic standpoint. (Following American usage, the