

BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

EDITED BY THE REV. ROLLIN J. FAIRBANKS, D.D.

The Ministry of the Laity: Francis O. Ayres; Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1962. 136 pp. \$2.50.

Since this book was first published, its title has become even more a commonplace than its author found it then—"a slogan of our time, one's enthusiasm for the concept a test of one's openness and mobility." The book takes its place in the "holy worldliness" succession which owes much now to Bonhoeffer, and numbers its author with Ellul, Congar-Michonneau-Kraemer, Trueblood, Berger-Winter-Lensky, and more recently the British writers of *Laymen's Church* and *God's Frozen People*. All these analysts are troubled, questioning, probing, only marginally prescribing.

Since 1948 the author has directed Parishfield, a lay-training center at Brighton, Michigan, where he has wrought out much of his devout opposition to the *banal* in the church. His chapters, here addressed to laymen, bear some marks of a sermon or lecture series. Laymen are bidden to "be ministers," with no direct understanding of what, distinctively, the minister is and does. The meaning is in any case much narrower than *diakonia*. In some traditions, for example, the unique function of the minister is to enunciate the words of the Communion; nothing else, centrally, matters. Laymen who define "minister" thus, on the authority of many of their clergy, must discover Christian obedience in some other way than being enjoined to "be ministers." Either that, or the word "minister" needs doctrinal overhauling. (Possibly we need first a book on "the laity of the ministry"!)

The way forward at this point may be new currents in post-Vatican-Council liturgy. *Is* gathered laity, as locus of the Spirit, actually "celebrant" at Baptism and Communion? One of the necessary ironies of institutional church life is that "lay movements" must be organized and indoctrinated by clergy. Would that the two had never been split apart.

Laymen nowadays stir less over status than over race and civil liberties, prayer in schools, and Bishop Robinson's attempt to demythologize theology. The author truly observes, "That you should be reading this book and not know you are called is beyond belief." Perhaps more germane now is whether the reader's call is to share riots, desegregated suburbs, and "the new morality." Calling people to take "the life and work of men and women in the world as seriously as the life and work of the clergy within the institutional church" is a curiously dated clerical injunction when both laymen and ministers are disputing this latter standard more radically than ever before.

JOHN OLIVER NELSON

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The Heart of Man: Erich Fromm; Harper and Row, New York, 1964. 156 pp. \$3.95.

Those who have found the other writings of Fromm somewhat



abstruse will be heartened by the directness in which he addresses himself to the genesis of good and evil in man. Fromm takes his cue for this discussion from the Old Testament view of man—man has the capacity for good and evil, and must make some *choice*. This choice is based on the specific differences found in each individual and upon the nature of the situation itself.

The author presents a penetrating analysis of man's capacity to destroy, against the background of man's capacity to love. He suggests that this book may be seen as the counterpart of his other work, *The Art of Loving*, in which he deals more fully with man's capacity to love. Expressly based on his clinical work as a psychoanalyst, Fromm suggests that there is a "syndrome of decay" and a "syndrome of growth" evident in human orientation, neither of which usually is developed fully in any one individual.

This "syndrome of decay" is seen as love of death, malignant narcissism and symbiotic-incestuous fixation. When fully developed it prompts men to destroy for the sake of destruction, and to hate for the sake of hate. On the other hand, the "syndrome of growth" consists of love of life, love of man, and independence. Love of life is set against love of death, love of man is set against narcissism, and independence is set against symbiotic-incestuous fixation. Only in a minority of people is either one of the two syndromes fully developed, but rather a mixture of both is seen in most people, making the nature of choice more poignant.

This book represents a massive, integrative attempt by a keen observer of American life to make more meaningful to this generation the question asked by the psalmist several thousand years ago, "What is man?" It is related in the language of the psychologically and sociologically sophisticated, yet clear enough to have meaning for anyone concerned with the paradoxical nature of man. Ministers who have felt biblical language lacking in interpreting man's nature to a psychologically minded generation will find this book highly suggestive in terms of finding a new way to express a Christian understanding of man.

Fromm's discussion of "freedom of choice" is especially helpful. Suggesting that "freedom of choice is not a formal abstract capacity which one either 'has' or 'has not'; it is, rather, a function of a person's character structure," he emphasizes that it is determined by irrational passions or reason. Only as *awareness* of oneself and *awareness* of good and evil in a given situation is optimal, are the possibilities for choice more focused. Often people feel they have no choice because they consider only the last decision in a chain of events, when circumstances have developed to the point that they really no longer do have a choice. In a day when it is difficult for the church to give direction to people in their choices in life, this book is suggestive of a manner that may give more profound understanding of what is really involved in choice.

HERBERT ZEROF

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Depth Perspectives in Pastoral Work: Thomas W. Klink; Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1965. 144 pp. \$2.95.

The time is long overdue for further developments in the investigation



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