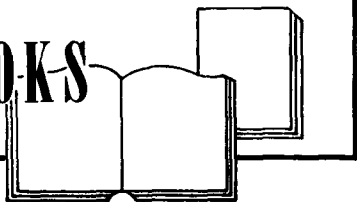


reviews of
current **BOOKS**



THE ART OF LOVING by Erich Fromm (Harper & Brothers—\$2.75)

(*This book is the current Selection of the Pastoral Psychology Book Club.*)

A book by Erich Fromm is an event to those who follow the growing literature in pastoral psychology. This book will be the more eagerly awaited because Fromm's previous books have raised fundamental issues in philosophy and ethics as well as in theology and psychology. The book is timely also because the question with which it deals arises repeatedly in counseling and in therapy when one faces the fact that he is incapable of loving and begins to ask, "Can I learn to love?"

In the opening chapter Fromm lays down the premise that love is an art which can be learned. He then takes up "The Theory of Love" in Chapter II, the longest of the four chapters which make up the book. Man's deepest need is to overcome his separateness; but there are various ways of trying to meet this need, as by orgiastic union, conformity, and creative activity. Mature love must be distinguished from symbiotic union either in its passive form as submission or in its active form as domination. Love is an activity; primarily it is giving, not receiving. It implies care, concern, responsibility, respect, and knowledge, especially knowledge of the mystery of being a person.

The problem of knowing man,

is parallel to the religious problem of knowing God. In Western theological thought as Fromm understands it, the characteristic attempt has been to know God by thought, while in mysticism the attempt is to achieve union with God which leads not to knowledge *about* God but to direct knowledge *of* God. Fromm leans especially heavily on Eastern mysticism and upon the use of paradoxical logic which results in the proposition that God cannot be known but can be experienced in union. Here is the foundation of Fromm's theology to which he later returns.

He then passes to consider different kinds of love—love between parents and children, brotherly love, erotic love, self-love. In parental love Fromm draws a distinction between motherly love as all-accepting and fatherly love as disciplinary; in the former, love is freely given, of grace; while in the latter, love must be deserved, earned. The two kinds of love are only too-well-known, of course, but to associate them with the mother and the father respectively seems rather dubious.

In treating self-love Fromm draws a distinction between selfishness, which is concerned only with oneself, and those feelings and activities of concern, respect, etc., which are directed toward oneself as legitimately as toward the other.

There follows a section on man's love of God. What this means depends,

of course, on what "God" means when one uses the term. Here Fromm is frank, as we have learned to expect. As we understand him, he equates belief in God-as-a-Person with infant I-ism; "God" seems to be, not a Self facing us, but at the lowest a projection of our immature wishes, and at the most a projection of our highest values.

The third chapter deals with love and its disintegration in contemporary society. This is a highly suggestive treatment of the forces which make for neurotic love and pseudo-love, and especially to be valued is the critique of the notion that love is to be equated with mutual sexual satisfaction, and the notion that equates love with teamwork.

The fourth chapter considers "The Practice of Loving." To learn to love requires discipline, concentration, patience, supreme concern with the art, becoming sensitive to oneself, objectivity or the ability to see things as they are, and faith. Faith may be irrational or rational. Rational faith is conviction rooted in one's own experience of thought or feeling, and is rooted in productivity. Only one who has faith in himself is able to have faith in the other and in his potentiality.

The book ends on a prophetic note. Love is an ultimate need in human existence. In modern society that need has been seriously obscured. "Any society which excludes, relatively, the development of love, must in the long run perish of its own contradiction with the basic necessities of human nature." But "to have faith in the possibility of love as a social and not only exceptional-individual phenomenon, is a rational faith based on the insight into the very nature of man."

In this work are many penetrating insights, many memorable passages. If one views the book by pieces and for-

gets the impact of the whole, many of the parts approach distinction.

If, however, one views the book as a whole, it seems probable that he will regard the book as a signal contribution or else will be restive, depending on the degree to which he can regard a frankly avowed humanism as providing an adequate philosophy of man and the universe. This reviewer must confess that while he regards the book as an important one and commends it for reading, he himself comes away from the reading with the conviction that love has a dimension which Fromm rejects because he cannot himself affirm it.

This dimension may be reduced to three of its aspects. First of all, love seems to mean first and primarily self-love. An earlier title of Fromm's, *Man for Himself*, puts the point a little more bluntly, but the plea for a profound self-regard runs through the present work. This point must not be misunderstood. Any one with clinical experience or the experience of counseling knows well enough how seriously a character structure is undermined when the individual is unable to have a wholesome self-love. But in Fromm one misses any pervasive affirmation that one cannot healthily love himself until he has been loved.

In the second place, rational faith in Fromm is faith in oneself; and such rational faith in oneself is a condition of being able to have faith in another. But the same kind of question arises in regard to faith as in regard to love: has not Fromm reversed the sequence which exists in human relations?

Third, Fromm finds himself philosophically in the position which seems to haunt the psychologist. Fromm knows the subjective world of inner reality, and he knows the symbols by which man tries to communicate his experience of the outer world; but he

cannot accept the symbols as corresponding to objective reality outside of the mind which produces the symbols. Hence it turns out that "God" is man's highest values; love of God is in the last analysis man's love of himself, and when the last word is said, faith in God would seem actually to mean faith in oneself.

If this is all that can be said of the nature of man and the universe it is well to say it simply and openly, as Fromm has done. But if the premises are shaky, a great deal more can be said about love than Fromm has said.

This book belongs in Harper's Series entitled *World Perspectives*, and one will be well rewarded not only by the book itself but also by Ruth Nanda Anschen's memorable preface.

—LEWIS J. SHERRILL
Professor of Practical Theology
Union Theological Seminary

UNDERSTANDING AND
 COUNSELING THE ALCOHOLIC by Howard J. Clinebell
 (Abingdon—\$3.75)

This book is, in this reviewer's opinion, the most thorough coverage of the problem of alcoholism and the many therapies employed to reach a solution—in so brief a compass—to come off the press so far. After three years of counseling with alcoholics six days each week I find it most practical and helpful, with a wealth of information furnished clearly and interestingly not available in any other single volume yet encountered. There are most valuable "suggestions," rather than laws laid down, about preparations for and techniques of counseling with alcoholics.

The author gives the pros and cons, concisely yet sufficiently presented, of various approaches to possible therapies and the reasoning behind their

employment. The book is written for those who want help in dealing with alcoholism. It is aimed at helping the individual who is confronted with such practical problems as what to teach concerning alcoholism and how to handle the alcoholic who comes seeking counsel. "Specifically, it is designed to be an aid to the person who wishes to apply religious resources more effectively to the problem of alcoholism," (from the author's preface). The Reverend Doctor Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., has more than adequately fulfilled his purpose!

He defines an "alcoholic," searches into the cause or causes of alcoholism, discusses the controversial question "is alcoholism a disease?" and if so, is it metabolic or psychological?

Part II, on the use of religious therapy, will be an eye-opener for very many who are fortunate enough to read the book. Facts are presented that demand much more than theoretical approach. He gives a fair and clear account of the Emanuel Movement, of the Salvation Army, of Alcoholics Anonymous, of the Yale Studies, of Skid Row and its redemptive missions, etc., and of their approach and techniques. This part of the book is an excellent summary of theory and practice and the facts underlying them.

There are chapters on the psychodynamics of the religious approach, the ethical problem, principles of counseling with reference to alcoholics and preparation for applying them, helping the families of alcoholics, the prevention of alcoholism; and there are innumerable references for the studious reader.

As is probably obvious, I am enthusiastic over the book and recommend it without reservations. The average layman can read it with understanding and profit; yet it is suf-