

REVIEWS

THE ENEMIES OF LOVE. By Dom Aelred Watkin. (Burns Oates; 10s. 6d.)

That great and good woman, Mother Janet Erskine Stuart, once observed that for most of us most of the time the love of God consists in daily unceasing love of our neighbour. Dom Aelred has worked out in this book the implications of that great truth with immense wisdom and sincere human understanding. It is, as the publishers claim, a book for ordinary people who are discovering their own emotions and finding their way through a maze of personal affections and relationships to a steady love that is both human and divine. An excellent first chapter entitled *What is Love?* lays out perfectly clearly the true Catholic teaching about love, *amor amicitiae*, the real thing, as opposed to *amor concupiscentiae*, which is no love at all but a spurious imitation often masquerading as the genuine article. So we realize that not only is there no rivalry between love of God and love of one's neighbour but the one fulfils the other: 'This is the first commandment. And the second is like to it . . .'

Still, we are all the victims of original sin, and self-love in one form or another constantly bedevils all our attempts to practise true love; and so Dom Aelred looks at the enemies of love, Anxiety, Jealousy, Possessiveness, Self-indulgence and False Romance. Here there is much welcome plain speaking and clear thinking; every time the remedy for the pain begins with facing facts and acknowledging that we are jealous, possessive and so on. Throughout the book the reader is aware of the firm balance the author keeps between clear hard wisdom and a warm generous pity for human frailty; firm principles never issue in harsh bye-laws, and human pity never blurs the edges of clear thought. It is rare to find such warmth of feeling combined with plain speech. Dom Aelred goes so far as to employ two mythical characters, Hilary and Vivian (names chosen because they may be masculine or feminine—a pity English has not a more euphonious selection) who go through the various emotional vicissitudes which illustrate the problems.

Besides balancing thought and emotion, Dom Aelred, especially in the last chapter, harmonizes the natural and the supernatural. It is difficult to avoid quoting long passages from the last chapter where it becomes clear what a constructive book this is: ' . . . love does demand a very high degree of unselfishness, but . . . love has allies so powerful that there should be no need of fear', our own natural dignity and all that prayer and the sacraments can give us. The last few pages which describe the sacraments as the sources of love are really moving. One

example must suffice: 'Holy Order and Matrimony are twin sacraments of love and should be considered together, for both are directly concerned with the spread of God's kingdom of love. [St Thomas must be happy to see himself so wisely quoted] Chastity is not a denial of love, indeed it . . . is a promise of love . . . to love God above all created things and . . . to love others without thought of response. It is no inhuman, remote, cold love that the priest must give: he must really love, really care about his people.' Comment is superfluous; one can only be grateful for such fruitful meditations.

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MARRIAGE WAS MADE FOR MAN. A Study of the Problem of Marriage and Divorce in relation to the Church of England. By A. P. Shepherd, D.D., Canon of Worcester. (Methuen; 8s. 6d.)

In the words of the dust-cover this is a direct and reasoned criticism of the recent resolutions of Convocation respecting Divorce and Remarriage. Throughout it is an attack on what is described as the rigorist thesis that marriage is an indissoluble contract. The form of this offensive is at once legal, scriptural and philosophic: legal, in so far as it shows the anomaly of the national Church at variance with the law of the land; scriptural in so far as it attempts to prove that the so-called rigorist position to be against the plain meaning of our Lord's words in St Matthew's Gospel, despite the vast amount of scholarly discussion on this text; and philosophic, in so far as the rigorist position of the indissolubility of the marriage contract is a somewhat brutal denial of the spiritual freedom of the individual and of liberty of thought and interpretation. In all this the tradition stemming from Rome is compared unfavourably with that of the Eastern Orthodox Church, who with her native Greek culture was never in danger of misunderstanding the Greek of the New Testament. And moreover the civilizing influence of the Byzantine Empire gave to Eastern Orthodoxy an advantage not enjoyed by the Western Patriarchate of Rome. The latter was too engrossed in evangelizing the savage hordes from the north. 'So too it was necessary that in the dark ages the Church of Rome should be the schoolmaster of Europe.' A refusal to recognize the awakening adolescence of western humanity in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, by the schoolmaster Rome, resulted in the Reformation. The principle of rule by fear and the rod must give way to that of spiritual enlightenment and freedom. It is because Canon Shepherd and those for whom he speaks feel strongly that these principles are being challenged by Convocation, that a stand is here made in the name of all true children of the enlightenment. But in spite of this rather time-worn and typically Protestant polemic, and