

Book Reviews

HOPE: PSYCHIATRY'S COMMITMENT. Edited by A. W. R. Sipe. New York, Brunner/Mazel, Inc., 1970. \$10.00.

A PHYSICIAN IN THE GENERAL PRACTICE OF PSYCHIATRY. Selected Papers of Leo Bartemeier, M.D. Edited by Peter A. Martin, A. W. R. Sipe, and Gene L. Usdin. New York, Brunner/Mazel, Inc., 1970. \$15.00.

"Greater love hath no man" than that he offer his life to others and enjoy doing it. This is the consistent tribute of the papers contained in *Hope: Psychiatry's Commitment*, a collection of articles presented to Leo H. Bartemeier, M.D., by a group of his admiring colleagues. A selection of his own papers, *A Physician in the General Practice of Psychiatry*, makes up the second of two companion volumes honoring the spirit and person of this man, who is one of the living fathers of

modern psychiatry and surrogate father to a host of current leaders in psychiatry, on the occasion of his 75th birthday.

These two works are Bartemeierian, from Gene Usdin's introduction to Peter Martin's biographical sketch in "Bart's" collection of papers that began in the 1920's to the articles by others that constitute *Hope*. These articles, written by some of the best-known leaders in psychiatry today, are Bartemeierian, too, partly because of the unifying purpose of paying tribute to Dr. Bartemeier and partly because of another theme reflected in the introductions to the papers by their several authors. Dr. Usdin summarizes the theme in these words: "Leo Bartemeier has given leadership that has been a presence almost in the theological sense. Where potential progress was, there Dr. Bartemeier would be. His physical stature is large, almost as if this was destiny in order to match his immense stature in the psy-

chiatric field. He has not been one to be intimidated, but neither is he intimidating; he does not frighten even the neophyte student who comes to learn at his feet. Instead, his commanding presence brings forth the best in those around him. This is a true teacher—a man who impresses you with what is in you.” (*A Physician in the General Practice of Psychiatry*, p. ix)

These distinguished contributing authors, representing a number of professional fields from theology to hard sciences, “do their own thing,” some of them with contributive elegance. Clearly, Dr. Bartemeier is one of those rare teachers or colleagues who are evocative of another’s best and personally gratified by another’s achievement.

Although there are individual articles by “Bart” in *A Physician* and by some of the psychiatric “stars” in *Hope* that can (and perhaps should) stand alone, the two volumes can be read, I think, most profitably in a certain order. Sipe’s and Usdin’s introductions and Martin’s biographical sketch “set the stage.” Dr. Bartemeier’s articles give a chronological and cross-sectional picture of the man, his interests, and a part of his multifaceted and scientific humanitarian contributions. The italicized tributes and

observations that begin these articles by some of the leaders in psychiatry can be read serially after reading “Bart.” To read them before exposure to “Bart” himself makes some of them sound a bit unbelievable. Last to be read are the articles that stem either directly from interests that these outstanding authors shared with Dr. Bartemeier or from his engagements with these men whose respect prompted them to submit the articles that they considered appropriate to the occasion or “a thing they had been waiting to set down.”

This suggestion for order in reading these two volumes comes from their heterogeneity. Possibly the suggestion is a neurotic derivative of mine to handle the affective responses evoked in me to such high praise for a single man from those on high across psychiatry’s frontiers and from its “central office.” However, the most likely explanation for making this suggestion is my own experience with “Bart.”

I had known some of his works, I had seen him on platforms of meetings dealing with scientific presentations and psychiatric administration. I was even mildly put off by him once at an A.P.A. meeting in Los Angeles when he chose to discuss appreciatively a very pedestrian pa-

per long past a discussant's time limit. (I was next on the program.) I had heard colleagues and leaders like Raymond Waggoner, Sr. and Jr., Peter Martin, Humberto Nagera, Moses Frohlich and other Michiganders, Maury Levine, Bob Daniels, and Knight Aldrich speak of this man with affection and quiet admiration. My personal curiosity about him was aroused. It was satisfied only a couple of years ago when I had my first informal evening with "Bart" at the home of friends for dinner and lively discussion. Retrospectively, I believe I came prepared to dislike him. But I soon found that his greeting handshake on introduction was an extension of his warmth toward me, a newcomer, as well as to all the other guests, mostly old friends of his. "Bart" unobtrusively but always enjoyably reminisced; he seemed to know, as well, all about the new frontiers and current hot issues. The evening let me experience for myself what colleagues had already experienced and what prompted so many of the authors of *Hope* to write as they have about this man. So, without the reader's having a chance for an evening with "Bart," next best is an evening with his writings. The accolades of his colleagues can then become believable as they are reflected

in Dr. Braceland's words: "A beloved colleague and friend who wears his honors as lightly as he does his years. His works and his character are inspirations to those who are privileged to know him." (*Hope*, p.5)

A word about each volume should be said. The editors of *A Physician* did their jobs well in making their selections from Dr. Bartemeier's many papers and organizing them into five sections: "Physicians," "Children," "Psychiatry," "Community," and "Psychoanalysis." The articles are characterized by simplicity in style, a warm humanitarian touch, and common sense; they are also prophetic of things to come in psychiatric attention, such as managing the amphetamine problem, the homicidal "announcer," the autistic-cognitively-impaired child mistaken for a feeble-minded one, or the employed-mother problem. In view of the span of his 50 years in psychiatry, his foresight is remarkable, but probably truly appreciated only by his peers-in-years. His hindsight and historical analyses of American psychiatry will remain permanent, ongoing contributions.

Dr. Bartemeier's simplicity, however, takes him apparently (too easily) over hurdles of theological or philosophical import. His beliefs

and his attempt to integrate them with psychoanalytic philosophy do not carry others persuasively with him. These problems can be seen in his chapter on "Healthy and Unhealthy Patterns of Religious Behavior." They are epitomized in his comment that religion's "function is worship. If there is no God, then indeed is religion an illusion [!], and all its manifestations are neurotic or worse [!]. This was Freud's position [!]. But if God exists, as we believe He does, then . . . He may allow that through His worship our temporal needs, including our psychological needs, may on occasion be met." (P. 290) He excludes a concert of sacred music as having worship potential and not to be confused with religious behavior unless it be as unhealthy religious behavior. To confuse it is the "current neuroticism of the esthete." (P. 292) Further, "psychoanalysis is now seen to be concerned with the psyche, where religion is concerned with the spiritual welfare of the whole man, but specifically with the soul, in whose essence grace resides." (P. 294) The "soul is not to be confused with the psyche." (P. 294) Interestingly, although many of "Bart's" writings demand and support the unification of body and mind, he insists on distinguishing

the soul from the psyche and does so without apparent conflict in himself.

Religionists and perhaps some analysts may be interested in Dr. Bartemeier's theology and his attempts to bridge his Catholicism with psychoanalysis. Although he is not compelling in such a bridge on paper, apparently his life style, skills, and behavior have been unoffensive to antireligionists, atheists, and agnostics. He has been respected and popular enough to be the only person I know to head the American Psychoanalytic Association, the International Psychoanalytic Association, and the American Psychiatric Association. Such a combination of presidencies brings to mind the breakthrough made by Catholic John Kennedy in his election to the Presidency.

The *Hope* volume suffers the disabilities to which any festschrift is subject: diversity and disparity. Each man is on his own. However, the stature and quality of the contributing authors set such a standard that the importance of some of the articles may even possibly get an undeserved dilution. Although one cannot give their due to most of the articles, a few must be specially mentioned.

Dr. Usdin's, Dr. Romano's, and Dr. Farnsworth's observations on the role of psychiatry and psychiatrists in civil rights, civil disobedience, civil disorder, in universities, and in social issues are as illuminative statements as I have seen about these loaded issues. Dr. David Levy's simple message about maternal feelings for infants is worthy of any mother's or professional's review. Dr. Rosen makes a point about suicide that I think gets clouded and glossed over in the mass of literature on that subject, namely, that suicidal behavior is psychotic behavior in all the cases he has seen. Dr. Barton's observations of psychiatric history over the past 50 years, augmented by a helpful bibliography, are worth the attention of any psychiatrist, student, or board-prepping candidate interested in the history of his specialty. Dr. Martin's survey of the psychotherapy of marriage partners is a needed organization, summation, and contribution to a field that at first appears to be all over the map. He, too, offers a comprehensive bibliography.

Dr. Brosin testified: "I believe that Dr. Bartemeier has lived a good life honorably and even with distinction. He offers hope as well as accomplishment." (*Hope*, p. 137) Fortunately, the honor due Dr.

Bartemeier is in part paid through the festschrift composed of these two volumes that he has and can appreciate throughout his autumnal years.

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WHEN CHILDREN ASK ABOUT GOD. By Harold S. Kushner. New York, *Reconstructionist Press*, 1971. \$5.00.

Children, as we well know, often ask searching and perplexing questions. Some of the most troubling of them deal with God and His involvement in this world. *When Children Ask About God* is an exceptionally insightful response to theological questions asked so frequently by adults as well as by children. For is it not the case that, were adults able to deal with the concept of God in a mature, understanding way, the questions children raise would in fact be answerable? This book, as the author reminds us, is primarily for adults who are searching for a consistent view of God that makes sense and who, in

turn, want to discuss such a view with their youngsters.

Rabbi Harold Kushner has set down an "essentially humanistic understanding of what God can mean to us, within the framework of the Jewish tradition—an understanding which can command both intellectual respect and profound moral commitment," but which avoids some of the dangerous and frightening misinformation we are so accustomed to hearing. Acknowledging his indebtedness to Piaget and Erikson, Kushner posits the theory that we must understand the history of the idea of God as evolutionary in nature and as paralleling the individual's changing concept of authority as he matures from infancy to adulthood. An infant views the world as existing only to satisfy his needs; the earliest forms of religion viewed the gods as extensions of society's ego, existing solely to respond to the society's needs. As the individual grows older, he learns that he is an independent person and comes to see his parents as authority figures, all-wise and all-powerful, rewarding and punishing. Similarly, in religious development, men grew to understand that demands were made upon them by gods, and they set down rules for behavior in moral codes. We know,

of course, that for a person to become fully mature, he must pass into a third stage of development in which standards of right and wrong become internalized. So Kushner posits that the next stage in the development of the God-idea "will be the *internalizing* of what is true and valid in religion, so that the rules we live by are no longer 'God's standards imposed upon us,' but our own standards, perceived and voluntarily adopted on the basis of experience and rational analysis." Of course, an immediate reaction is to argue against this very nonpersonal emerging concept of God. Yet Kushner defends his belief in a personal God—"not that He *has* personality but that He *affects* people personally"—and defines the God-idea, following Professor Mordecai M. Kaplan, as that Power or Force that helps us identify "what is good, true, and worthwhile and which moves us to pledge ourselves to live up to it."

Again employing models of psychic development, the author suggests approaches to questions children raise at various age levels. He cautions us to listen carefully to what is *really* being asked and to bear in mind that when a child of six asks "How do I know there really is a God?" and when a youngster of 14

asks the same question, two different questions with differing intents are being raised and the responses must be on two entirely different levels. Some of the questions dealt with are: "Why can't I see God?"; "Who made God?"; and "Do I have to believe in God to be good?"

In an exceptionally brilliant chapter, Kushner cautions against blaming God for "acts of God" and deals with children's concerns about suffering, evil, and death, including the question of "Why does God make

bad people?" He concludes his work with a discussion of the Bible touching upon the issues of biblical truth, miracles, and how the Bible ought to be read, as well as certain key religious concepts such as prayer, commandment, sin, and redemption.

Every parent, every clergyman, and every teacher ought to study and reread this clearly written, concise, and brilliant work.

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