

BERNARD SCHOENBERG, ARTHUR C. CARR, DAVID PERETZ, and AUSTIN H. KUTSCHER, eds. *Psychosocial Aspects of Terminal Care*. Pp. v, 388. New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1972. \$12.50.

This book grew out of a symposium organized by the Foundation of Thanatology and the Columbia University Departments of Psychiatry and Nursing. It presents the proceedings of the conference and contains twenty-seven papers or chapters and thirteen shorter statements. The shorter statements are either summaries or opening statements of the various workshops which were held. These papers and statements, including a foreword, are authored by forty-eight persons from such disciplines as dentistry (1), hematology (1), medicine (8), nursing (4), oncology (1), pediatrics (2), pharmacology (2), psychiatry (12), psychology (6), radiology (2), religion (1), social work (3), sociology (2), and surgery (3). The authors came from various places in the United States and from as far away as Australia, Hawaii, and England.

The authors deal with the deficiencies in the psychosocial training of health personnel who are going to be in contact with the terminally ill and their families, and they make a plea that a new approach is needed. They point out that one of the problems of modern society is that death is considered unnatural, that the medical profession itself is often in conflict over its role in treating the terminally ill. The following illustrates what the authors want to avoid. After a series of tests a patient has to call his doctor after not having had a report from him. The doctor asked whether his nurse had not called and being told that the patient had heard from no one, said, "Oh, I see. Well the tests reveal that you will be dead in from four to six weeks." Often when physicians cannot cure they have feelings of guilt and anxiety, and can scarcely cope with their own fears of dying.

The authors deal with the differences between the needs of young patients who face death and older ones. They discuss the problems of the family which loses a

young child and the very different problems of the family which has an elderly person going through a prolonged period of a terminal illness. There is a discussion of the psychosocial needs of the young and the very different psychosocial needs of the elderly.

There are chapters that discuss ethical issues such as euthanasia, organ transplantation, and the questions which are raised when persons are kept alive by all kinds of mechanical means even after no evidence of humanness and personality is left; they are biologically alive but humanly dead.

Although this book is addressed in general to those who teach medical students, nurses, social workers, and others who are likely to have contact with terminally ill patients or their families, it has much in it for readers who are interested in ways of ameliorating the often callous treatment of the dying patient and the bereaved family. The volume should contribute greatly to the growing information about the problems of the dying. As the numbers of aged persons increase and society and institutions become more secular, there is a new awareness of the many psychosocial problems which beset the terminally ill and their families. It is illustrative of the newness of the changes taking place that a great majority of the citations used in this book are from works published after 1960.

H. ASHLEY WEEKS

Department of Medical Care
Organization
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor

RONALD H. STONE. *Reinhold Niebuhr: Prophet to Politicians*. Pp. 272. Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1972. \$8.00.

Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971), after serving as pastor of an Evangelical church in Detroit from 1915 to 1928, was called to Union Theological Seminary, where he was a professor of Applied Christianity from 1930 until his retirement in 1960. In the remaining years of his life, though handicapped by ill health, he held part-time positions at Union, Harvard, and Barnard College. He should not be confused with his