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## Book Review

### *Medicine and Morals*

John Marshall, M.D.

#### Book Review by

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This book is volume one hundred and twenty-nine of The Twentieth Century of Catholicism series, under Section XIII, "Catholicism and Science." In it, the author, Doctor John Marshall, a Catholic who studied medicine at the University of Manchester and after practicing psychiatry began to specialize in neurology, is well-qualified to treat the morality of cases which arise in connection with the fifth commandment.

Starting out by treating the nature of man, Dr. Marshall makes it clear that man is not merely a biological organism, nor should he be treated as such. Then, in treating the origin and nature of the natural law, he shows how it is unchangeable. Neither expediency, nor convenience, nor the personal opinion of learned men are enough to alter the immutable precepts of the natural law. In its practical applications it is never the law itself which changes. However Dr. Marshall explains that this does not rule out the prudent use of the principles of totality and of the twofold effect, justifying, for instance, the removal of a pathological organ for the good of the whole, which might preclude future pregnancies, as an unintended effect.

After a short chapter entitled: "The Doctor in the Mystical Body," the author expounds on the nature and purpose of marriage and the marital act, with special attention to the problems of contraception, the infertile period and the doctor's role in each. It is interesting to note that he has a special section here devoted to the function of the Catholic doctor with non-Catholic patients wherein he lays emphasis on the point which many erroneously term "Catholic morality" is really not only that upheld by the Catholic Church but the norm of morality, the natural law which binds all men.

Finally, in the last section of this chapter Dr. Marshall illustrates what he means and advocates by "family planning," not "planned par-

enthoud," but planning in the prudent sense of foreseeing what the parents are capable of, having in mind the economic and social status of the family and the psychological condition of the mother and father.

The next three chapters give a very sound and solid treatment of the questions of infertility, sterilization and abortion. Then the doctor allots a separate chapter to all the ramifications which fall under the topic: childbirth, mother or child?

Rounding out his treatise he handles the questions: the use of means to preserve life, ordinary and extraordinary; dietetic excess; exercise; the use of pills; the new techniques of medicine; the proper conduct in the instance of pain, its alleviation and its function as an integral part of life; euthanasia; the question of the obligation of the physician to inform his patient of his approaching death, and the very practical problem of when to call the priest for extreme unction.

Finally, as a doctor-psychiatrist, Dr. Marshall concludes with a chapter on psychiatry and medicine, giving a brief history of the former and the Catholic slant on psychiatry.

*Medicine and Morals* could be profitably read by all doctors. It includes a bibliography which should supplement the reader's quest for detailed explanations of many of the problems discussed by Dr. Marshall. The book's value lies in its calm but urgent insistence that it is the vital role of the Catholic medical doctor, by his firmness in decision, prudence in action and constancy versus opposition to uphold the moral law in medicine.

#### **Medicine and Morals**

First Edition, October 1960

Hawthorn Books, Inc., New York

pp. 9 + 140.