DAVID E. ROBERTS

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THE unexpected and untimely death last winter of David E. Roberts was a heavy blow to the pastoral psychology that has emerged in recent years. For in addition to the work he had already done bearing on pastoral psychology, it was clear that he would do more. Perhaps no one else but his own colleague, Paul Tillich, has had such gifts for relating the psychological disciplines to Christian thought. And the nature of their respective contributions has been complementary rather than of the same order.

The basic outline of David Roberts’s approach to relating theology and psychology was set forth admirably in his *Psychotherapy and a Christian View of Man* (1950). But this volume was all too brief, was regarded by Roberts himself as merely an introduction, and was far from exhausting the richness of his thinking about this psychological theological relationship.

We owe a particular debt, therefore, to the Oxford University Press and to its religious editor, Wilbur D. Ruggles, for the publication of *The Grandeur and Misery of Man*, the current selection of the Pastoral Psychology Book Club. The excellent selection of the sermons for inclusion in this book has been done by Mrs. David E. Roberts and by Robert McAfee Brown, a friend and faculty colleague of Roberts at Union Theological Seminary. Now in preparation is a second volume of Roberts’s writings, on existentialism and Christian faith. The possibilities are also being explored of making available in book form those psychological writings of Roberts that are now printed only in journals.

THE BOOK’S title sermon reprinted in this issue, on “The Grandeur and Misery of Man,” rightly suggests the basic theme of the entire volume. Modern man, Roberts contends, is as fearful of confronting his potential grandeur as child of God as he is of admitting the vileness that separates him from God. From first page to last, the concern is with depth in the actualities of human experience. But this depth, whether for good or for ill, can be recognized and felt only with the aid of Christian faith.

Faith itself, Roberts wrote, “is not so much the breaking in of something never there before, as it is the effectual