

African Christian Theology, yet effective moral guidance for people caught up in social change is at once an urgent pastoral priority and a stimulus to theological reflection. I feel that changes taking place in African societies and in the ways Africans understood their own cultures were much more significant in conversion to Christianity than Fr Shorter explicitly recognises. If so, his portrait of two sets of closed societies engaging in uncomprehending confrontation is certainly not the whole truth. For that matter, on the missionary side, considerable adaptations of parish structures took place well before the second Vatican Council, as anybody who has encountered the formidable church committees of Nigeria will agree.

Furthermore, while his anthropological background frees him from the unduly static view of African religion that has afflicted some writers, he is at times not entirely satisfying in the way

he links social and religious institutions. Thus, surely, one reason for the relative lack of dialogue between missionaries and the adherents of traditional religion in the 'golden age' of missionary work was the colonial setting, but this is not really mentioned. Similarly, there is no discussion of how changes in social structures and political systems may affect the background in which theologians work, and hence their theological findings.

My criticisms may seem rather carping, particularly since I am dealing with what seems to be the only book surveying realistically the possibilities for African theology. And perhaps I would be ashamed of having put finger to typewriter key if Aylward Shorter, whom I have known for over twenty-five years, were to continue the dialogue by saying, 'Yes, Adrian, quite so. Why not write something better yourself?'

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JOHN HENRY NEWMAN AND THE ABBE JAGER, by Louis Allen. *Oxford University Press*, London, 1975. 202 pp. £7.50.

Newman's controversy on scripture and tradition, with the Abbé Jager, between 1834 and 1836, has long been recognised as marking an important stage in the development of his thought. In particular, it was in a letter to R. H. Froude, discussing the controversy, that Newman first explicitly formulated the distinction between 'prophetic' and 'apostolic' tradition. This distinction was then developed in Newman's second letter to Jager, chunks of which were subsequently incorporated into the *Lectures on the Prophetic Office*. As an attempt at 'dialogue' the controversy was not particularly successful. Jager never really understood the precise sense in which Newman was using the key concept of 'fundamentals', and the Frenchman's eclectic prolixity made it difficult to keep the issues in focus, or their treatment under control: 'I am impatient to be on the field of battle; but I am hindered by an obstacle in my way. That obstacle, my dear sir, is yourself. You wish me to hasten to seek you out, and you flood the road which separates us' (p. 82). Newman was, in fact, less interested in Jager's views than in developing his own, and yet he was more profoundly influenced by Jager than he acknowledged, either then or later.

What Louis Allen has given us is a painstakingly scholarly edition of New-

man's contributions to the debate (the last of which has not previously been published), with summaries of Jager's voluminous offerings, a good introduction and a useful series of appendices (including one devoted to the correspondence with Froude, mentioned above). Whereas Henry Tristram, in an early account of the controversy, treated it as something rather exceptional in the history of the Oxford Movement, Allen argues that 'it must therefore clearly be seen as being not only in the mainstream of the perennial debate between Gallicans and Anglicans on the nature of the Church, but also as part of the detailed picture of the Anglican Church which was continuously presented to French Catholic readers between 1830 and 1850' (p. 3). Allen further claims that 'the key text of the *Via Media*, and the main idea behind the *Essay on Development*, are directly derived from this controversy' (p. 3). Here it is necessary to sound a note of caution. As I have recently tried to show elsewhere, there is both continuity and a fascinatingly subtle series of shifts in Newman's views on tradition from *Arians* (in 1833) to the *Essay* (in 1845) and beyond. That the controversy with Jager had a part to play in this development is undoubtedly true, but it would be as unhelpful to exaggerate that part as to underestimate it.

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