

Mystery. What criterion have we to allow us to accept Boehme as a mystical authority? The Catholic will always approach 'mystical' writings, even those of the greatest such as St John of the Cross, with his terms of reference firmly fixed in the living Church in which he finds the true and living Gospel always being expounded, the true Word of God, the revelation of the mystery. But for Mr Hobhouse it is quite the opposite; having discovered the light reflected in Boehme's pewter pot he can approach the Bible itself with new confidence for he feels that he has new light to discern the objectionable from the true in the Bible itself. He has apparently been taught by the mystics what is 'unchristlike' in the New Testament, what books have to be rejected and what can be explained by allegorical interpretations. Such an approach is surely not only presumptuous but also dangerous. It is of course the devout modernist's approach which ends by offering the whole Bible as a burnt holocaust and leaving men without a vestige of Christian hope. Yet with the surety of a faith grounded in the living Christ one can read the mysterious effusions of such a man as Boehme with interest and even with profit. C.P.

THE SEVEN CHRISTIAN VIRTUES. By Hugh Ross Williamson. (S.C.M. Press; 9s.6d.)

This is Mr Williamson's third attempt to state his case. There was the play *The Seven Deadly Virtues* about 1934, and the pamphlet *A.D.33* at the beginning of the war and it does not need the author's statement in the Introduction to the present work that *A.D.33* was 'withdrawn from circulation as it contains much of what I now see to be heresy' to convince one of the sincerity of this book.

The theme of this book is that there is nothing new about the seven Christian virtues. 'Temperance, Fortitude, Justice (and) Prudence were the four virtues recognised by the general moral consciousness of Greece—and therefore of the ancient world.' Faith, Hope and Love characterised the outlook of the Jews. The meaning of these seven virtues was transformed by the 'internal logic of the Cross'—and he analyses the revolution which Christ originated in their meaning.

It is a penetrating study, lucidly written and with a profound understanding of the Catholic position—the whole book will repay reading, but if you need an aperitif read the short last chapter, 'The Christian Virtues in a Post-Christian State'.

TERENCE TANNER.

DIALOGUE WITH AN ANGEL. By Sister Mary Jeremy, O.P. (Devin-Adair Company, U.S.A.; \$2.)

In the response evoked by metaphysical poetry, sympathy is half the battle: sensibility the other half. However with this particular kind of religious poetry the critic must always be wary of allowing his personal sympathy to outrun his critical sensibility; of becoming a prey to dogma for the sake of dogma. So let it be said straightaway