

history of the church, and the Christian leaders are worse treated by the Jewish leaders (and come out more triumphant).

He sets out in full more than sixty passages for consideration; for most of these the text of Codex Vaticanus is printed beside the text of Codex Bezae, with a detailed critical apparatus giving the readings of other 'Western' witnesses. The whole is accurately and beautifully printed as one would expect from the Cambridge University Press. But the apparatus, the footnotes, and the discussion are far longer and more elaborate than necessary to prove the point; Lagrange's twenty pages on the 'Western' text of Acts cover a wider range of questions than this whole book.

The basic difficulty in Epp's thesis, a difficulty he never mentions, is that the Codex Vaticanus text of Acts already places a large share of the blame for Jesus's death on the Jews, already shows Christianity breaking away from Judaism, and already shows the apostles as persecuted heroes. If the longer Codex Bezae should give us the result of

repeated copyings by scribes who were variously pious, liturgically minded, pedantic, ready to explain, and perhaps not averse to adding a touch of colour, we should expect the result to heighten tendencies already present in the original. In fact it is surprising how few passages betray the anti-Judaic bias Epp claims to find; he has possibly succeeded in adding two to the commonly accepted list, but most of his arguments completely fail to convince. I can see no basis for his claim that 'the relatively few D (Codex Bezae) - variants previously recognised as distinctly anti-Judaic have been vastly expanded so that a clear and consistent tendency comes boldly into view'.

My own feeling is that the way forward lies in asking, not just why Codex Bezae is long, but also why Codex Vaticanus is short. Whether or not the 'Western' text was the work of one editor, the 'Alexandrian' text almost certainly was - and he a brilliant and faithful scholar of whose methods and resources it would be good to know more.

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THREE FOURTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH MYSTICS, by Phyllis Hodgson. *Longman, Green & Co.* 1967. 47 pages. 3s. 6d.

WHAT IS MYSTICISM?, by David Knowles. *Burns & Oates.* 1967. 140 pages. 18s.

Professor Hodgson's little book is a convenient, readable introduction to Rolle, Hilton, and the author of the *Clowde of Unknowyng*. It is one of a literary series, and there is not much theological rigour in its treatment of these writers - there are some puzzling attempts to find parallels in more modern poets, like Matthew Arnold (of all people). But, as we know from her editions for the E.E.T.S., Prof. Hodgson, even if strictly an amateur in the field of mysticism, is a very informed one, and, apart from one or two strange excrescences such as those referred to, her summary of the thought of the writers she deals with is exemplary. My only regret is that no room could be found for Julian of Norwich; though she is outside the mainstream of Dionysian mysticism, she is probably more immediately accessible to modern religious thought, with her great concern for the Church and her 'even-Christians', and her thoroughly scriptural inspiration.

The same sort of regret may be felt much more acutely with regard to Professor Knowles's new book, *What is Mysticism?* This is a competent, if rather plodding, account of the standard categories of Catholic mysticism, together with a brief enquiry into non-Catholic and non-Christian mysticism. Like the orthodoxy it represents, it is a highly selective

account - it seems to exclude St Thomas Aquinas, for instance (why is 'one who indulges in theological speculation . . . no mystic'?). But the real complaint against the book is that it still operates within an entirely closed system. Like Mariology, mysticism has developed as a rather too independent and esoteric study, having but little contact in depth with theological and scriptural studies. It is now high time for all these various disciplines to be synthesised, or rather concentricised, within an overall Christian awareness, within the general consciousness of herself that the Church is developing today.

Professor Knowles gives us a lucid discussion of most of the standard problems, such as the relationship between meditation and contemplation, and the significance of visions and ecstasies. Such discussion may be useful; but what we need much more is an enquiry into mysticism which takes seriously the insights of the modern Church, especially the insights and movements of thought canonised by Vatican II. It is a central contention of mystical theology that in the highest forms of prayer God is the sole agent: it is now imperative that this be related to the sacraments, for it is there that we know with absolute certainty that God is the agent. And this immediately

calls into question the traditional delimitation of mysticism. What happens, for instance, when we take baptism seriously? All Christians are found to have the mind of Christ (I Cor. 2.16), the Spirit of God, which is at home even in the depths of God (*ibid.* 2.10ff). All Christians are found to have the gifts of the Holy Spirit, including those proper to supernatural contemplation (this is the doctrine of St Thomas). The empirical data provided by the mystics must be interpreted in the light of these theological data. And this raises the further problem, mentioned but not developed by Garrigou-Lagrangé, of the man who lives an active life in union with God. If the culmination of mysticism is union, spiritual marriage, with God, this is not confined to 'contemplatives' – and what of St Paul's assertion that by baptism we are all made members of Christ, and therefore 'one spirit' with God (I Cor. 6.15ff)?

This leads us to the further consideration, powerfully stated by St Bernard *inter alios*, that these theological data apply in the first place to the Church as a whole, as the Body of Christ. My knowledge and love of God are derivative from, or a participation in the Church's knowledge and love. We need an ecclesial theology of mysticism. And this will entail a consideration of liturgical prayer, as the canonical actualisation of the Church's relationship with God, in love and knowledge

(this is one of the central doctrines of Vatican II).

Also involved here is the rediscovery of the centrality of the twofold commandment of love, as requiring a radical commitment to other people, in the Church and outside. No account of the mystical life can any longer be regarded as adequate, which does not set this commitment at its very centre – any account can perhaps be judged, on this basis, by its ability to provide for the active life of charity.

These are just some hints as to what we may reasonably expect of a modern account of mysticism. A useful contribution is made by Dom Sebastian Moore's *God is a New Language* (which is being reviewed separately). In spite of its flashy appearance, this book offers us a profoundly contemplative approach to experiential knowledge of God, deeply rooted in an awareness of the Church as the community of the Risen Body of Christ, and of the twofold (though ultimately single) commandment of love as the centre of the life of this community.

This new approach does not necessarily invalidate the traditional (though not very old) orthodoxy represented by Prof. Knowles; but it will subject it to rigorous theological re-orientation, and seek to banish all esotericism, and relate it to the whole mystery of the life of grace in the Church.

SIMON TUGWELL, O.P.

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, by C. S. Dessain. *Nelson*, 30s.

All efforts to promote the study of Newman's work in seminaries, colleges, and universities surely deserves every possible encouragement. In many of these places the recognition of Newman hardly gets beyond deploring English neglect of one of the greatest of her scholars and teachers. His great achievement, as this very good short book brings out, was to see clearly the difficulties of faith and intellect which were coming to the fore in his own time, and are with us now in the middle of the twentieth century. He rejected the sterile attempts to 'prove' the truth of Christianity by rational argument, as well as the whittling away tactics of liberalism, the force of which he fully encountered as a fellow of Oriel. His own way was more subtle and more profound, based as it was on his own inward experience. Yet he had no difficulty in reconciling this approach with the great sources of all Christian experience, the Bible and the Fathers ('who made me a Catholic'). It is significant that, as Fr Dessain tells us, in Newman's

own copy of the practical and balanced *Parochial and Plain Sermons* 'he has inserted various references to the Fathers which, with the constant quotations from Scripture, brings home how authentic his sources were'. He found his way to the Catholic Church by this rigorous and thorough study of Christian sources and so avoided the bad effect of the rather low state of theological learning then prevailing in the Roman schools. Fr Dessain's brilliant introduction to the *Parochial and Plain Sermons* in chapters 2 and 4 of his book ought to compel readers to turn to the sermons themselves, in order to learn 'English Christianity at its noblest' from them. The wonderful style is a joy to read. Equally useful introductions are given to Newman's other main works, and there are many quotations.

Fr Dessain devotes the greater part of his space to introducing us to Newman's writings and teachings, and passes over more briefly, sometimes very briefly, the details of Newman's