

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

crowded life. But such details are available elsewhere. (One minor point: on page 120 Newman's remark that 'unless one doctored all one's facts one would be accused of being a bad Catholic' refers, according to Ward, not to the writing of books but to the proposed starting of an historical Review). The most significant events and their causes, such as his becoming a Catholic, are well-treated. He also makes clear that the framework and setting of Newman's Catholic life was his Oratory, which he loved

dearly, and whose members shared his own setbacks and triumphs.

This book is another pointer to Newman as the man for our time, a fact clearly proclaimed during the second Vatican Council. His life was, as Fr Dessain puts it 'a sacrifice for the truth' – the truth which he saw as needing no protection against error: 'Truth has a power of its own, which makes its way'. This book is a first-rate introduction to a great and holy Englishman.

GEOFFREY PONTON, O.P.

LETTERS FROM A TRAVELLER, by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: *Fontana Books*. 317 pp., 5s.

'The secret of the world lies wherever we can discern the transparency of the universe' writes Teilhard in the first letter of this book. His search to break through appearances and his resulting two-fold vision – i.e. of the encounter in the human consciousness between the evolutionary forward progress of mankind on the one hand, and on the other the upward climb of mankind to (and in) Christ in whom it will all be completed – form an undercurrent running through all these letters.

For it becomes evident that he actually lived for his vision – '... this "great Christ" alone can animate my life' – as a man whose trust in God involves (in a phrase which admirably sums up both the traditional foundation and the breadth of his thought) 'an active abandonment of self in a universe on the road to christification'. It is part of the fascination of this book to see him working this out in every sphere. Thus he tells a friend that his business enterprise is forming him within the world, and helping the world to form itself around him; and that he is not to worry if he is unable to spread the fire within him – the essential thing is that the fire should be born: it will 'bear the world's homage to God'. An interesting sidelight perhaps on Teilhard's approach to the refusal to publish his books. Stuck in Peking during the war he sees a new development of humanity based on this universal understanding as the only solution to the issues of the war. As a scientist he is convinced that it is only the 'science of Christ running through all things' that really matters: it was essential for him to establish himself as a

specialist in the past to speak with authority about the future – to discover the measure and place of the phenomenon of man and establish the unity of all human knowledge.

All this is a current in what amounts to an exciting travel book, and an explorer's one. The first letter was written in 1923 on a ship for China, the last in 1955 from America just before Teilhard's death. There are letters also from Ethiopia, India, Burma and South Africa, and a few written from Europe; but mostly they are from China: a China which seems very far off now. There is something of travel, the country and the people – and their turmoil – and always Teilhard's developing mind. In 1923 he saw in China 'no promise of progress, no ferment, no burgeoning for mankind of tomorrow', by 1931 he is saying 'how profoundly the spirit of the country has changed'. There are glimpses of politics, too, some shrewd – the assessment from America of Eisenhower's election perhaps; some maybe less so – in 1936 Teilhard writes from India that he thinks the Indians probably incapable of self-government.

There is an informative and penetrating introduction by Claude Aragonnes (the name under which the late Mlle Teilhard-Chambon, Teilhard's cousin, wrote) whose notes very successfully link the letters and cover the inevitable gaps, sometimes commenting. Mostly the letters were written to Mlle Teilhard-Chambon, the Abbé Breuil (a friend and colleague) and to Joseph Teilhard de Chardin (Teilhard's brother).

ANTHONY ARCHER, O.P.

COMMONWEAL. Vol. LXXXV, No. 18, 10th February, 1967. Special issue on GOD.

THE GOD I WANT. Edited and introduced by James Mitchell. *Constable*, 1967, 21s.

Why is it not possible in this country to support a weekly magazine of the excellence of *Commonweal*? This fact needs explaining and it is a great lack which we English Catholics should feel deeply. This issue is the first of a series called

'Commonweal Papers' which will deal with broader and more difficult topics than is usually possible. To start the series the subject is 'God' and seven stimulating articles by American scholars treat the problem from the point of