

he exposes the weakness of the 'egalitarian' theory of democracy and shows the hierarchical character of membership in the mystical body of Christ. The last two addresses on Learning in War-time and The Inner Ring are less theological and reveal Dr Lewis more as a humanist than a moralist, but they show his practical good sense at its best. The only fault one is inclined to find in him is that which besets all moralists: he sometimes gives the impression that he knows too much. There is too little sense of the mystery and inconsequence of life. But this is a price which is worth paying for so much wisdom and good sense.

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THE CREED IN SLOW MOTION. By Ronald Knox. (Sheed & Ward; 8s.6d.)

I began this book with the feeling that Mgr Knox was not being quite frank. If he must write these books for girls, why not show it in the title? Why not call them 'The Girls' Own Mass' and 'The Creed at Aldenham Hall'? But I was wrong—this book at any rate is not only for girls and any internal evidence that gives rise to that impression is mere lip-service to the audience before whom these talks were delivered. Anyone can benefit from this book, priests, perhaps, not least.

But it is an irritating book for all that. I remember the feeling of injustice that hung over my college days because professors wantonly did in public the very things which merited for us severe reprimands. Mgr Knox (as every school-girl will be quick to perceive) does something of the kind here. 'There are two separate styles in English, the conversational and the literary', so we are all taught as children and woe betide the child who uses 'can't' or 'shouldn't' in an essay! Mgr Knox uses these forms throughout his book—but he is a master of English and will get away with it, and will probably pick up besides quite a little praise (how tired he must be of it all!) for the sheer beauty of his style.

Then there is an artificiality evident which had I been listening to these instructions would have antagonised me, and which now in book form remains ineffectual. 'The very subject we are discussing this afternoon (if we find time to discuss it) . . . ' p. 5: and p. 9, 'We haven't left time to talk about the subject I meant to talk about this afternoon, which was, if you remember, that of belief in God'. As everyone knows the care with which Mgr Knox prepares his MISS, and the fidelity with which he adheres to them, these are ponderous devices and even if they were more airy they would still merit condemnation on the mere score of artificiality.

I think Mgr Knox misses some good openings. Take, for instance, the description of the end of the torch-light procession at Lourdes: 'tens of thousands of candles flickering there below . . . So many of them, they don't look like separate candles; it is just a vast haze of light. And the people are singing Credo; Credo, not Credimus.'

What an opportunity to ram home the Unity of the Mystical Body, but Mgr Knox throws it away with the prodigality of an artist and prefers to reconstruct those separate flames from out that vast haze. 'When we sing Credo, we are not meant to lose ourselves in a crowd. Every clause of it is the expression of my opinion.' That idea can be brought out too (and I would delight to see it worked out by the author) but it should wait till the end, till Amen, till So be it, the assent of my mind *and* heart. (Amen to me means, 'I would not alter one iota of it, God, even if I could'.)

There are questions of policy, too, over which controversy could rage. What defence ought a Catholic girl to adopt when her non-Catholic friends doubt Catholic doctrine? Should she say, 'Well, I am a Catholic and so have to believe it'? Mgr Knox would seem to disapprove of that line. 'There are perfectly good grounds on which you can tackle a person who says the soul is destroyed at death: not perhaps so as to convince him of the contrary, but at least to show him that he can't prove his case. And those grounds as a Catholic you ought to know; not for your own sake so much as for the sake of other people.' (p. 7.) But the first method of defence is really an attack. Every argument by this means can be turned into an argument on the divine origin of the Church: know that thoroughly and your arguments will have a chance of getting you somewhere. The other way, however, may lead to the senseless and harmful practice of banging your heads together at the end of a cul-de-sac.

A lot more of this kind could be written—these remarks on some aspects of the first chapter are only an indication. A full commentary would need another book and this book is not quite as important as that. Should it have been written at all? Mgr Knox has more justification than many another for publishing his sermons, mainly because he never preaches. Everything of his is polished and complete, has its own essence and existence before it becomes public, so that his sermons are rather readings from his own unpublished works. To that extent the case for publishing is almost greater than the case for delivering them as talks. In this case, however, the style condemns it most. There can be no girls' (nor for that matter boys') school which as a school could assimilate more than one-tenth of these talks, and I remember the remark of a tough boiler-hand to whom I gave 'The Mass in Slow Motion': 'Yes, it is good but I felt such a fool reading a girls' book'. Many other people will feel like that and, I fear, be put off reading this very good book by the artificial and accidental presentation of Catholic (i.e. for all) belief.

Mgr Knox has now written three books on the Creed: *The Belief of Catholics*, *I Believe* and *The Creed in Slow Motion*, but the greatest of these is *In Soft Garments*.

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