

of the comfort derived from Thomist theology—from the teaching of the Angelic Doctor himself—by another type of convert; by the one who has been puzzled by the obscurity and individualism of his own conversion. But I have not—at least in intention—cut loose from my foundation of experience and observed facts, and so I hope that I may escape the accusation of amateurish dabbling in high theology.

IDIOTES



EXTRACTS

IT IS TIME that a Christian student of St John of the Cross studied also the Indian systems of spiritual life and compared them with their western counterparts and especially with the great Carmelite Mystic. It has been done the other way round very sympathetically by an Indian in *Vedanta and the West* (Hollywood, California), in its May-June issue. Swami Siddheswaranda has here a long article on the 'Raja Yoga of St John of the Cross'. He seems to understand what the Christian means by the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ, and of the Christian critics of Indian Yoga selects only the Calvinistic type that regards the Christian as utterly corrupted by original sin and justified entirely by God without any activity on his side. The author naturally quotes St John of the Cross as requiring the beginner to be active—in discursive meditation and such like. And he goes on to show the similarities between the 'rights' of the senses and of the spirit with the stages of Yoga which passes from the active to the passive.

Yet the close similarity between the Christian mystical 'system' and that of the Indian has to be watched very carefully. It seems, on reading this article, that Yoga comprises an almost exclusively philosophical attitude to the world and does not begin to consider the supernatural which is St John's starting point. Nevertheless, a comparison of the systems of Yoga and St John of the Cross is extremely interesting, especially from such a sympathetic pen.

After comparing the three stages of the spiritual life in the two systems the author continues:

Having stressed the subtle transition of the soul from the active to the passive stage with quotations from St John of the Cross, let us pause now to better our understanding of the second Sutra of Patanjali: 'Yoga consists in keeping the mind-stuff from taking various forms.' There has been much misunderstanding among Occidental theologians concerning the annihilation of the thought-waves according to yoga. Those who interpret spiritual effort as

limited to reducing the mind to immobility are right to be pessimist because, in itself, mental suicide does not prove anything. However, the theologians, yogis, philosophers . . . who undertake the realization of the second Sutra of Patanjali do not see it as an end in itself, but as an approach to the true vision of the Reality.

The positive side, the author shows us, is expressed in the third Sutra: 'Then the seer [the Purusha or the Godhead within us] abides in his real nature.'

The event takes place in the eternity of the instant. Thus, there is no lapse in time between the destruction of the mind-waves and the possession of the soul by the Purusha. The annihilation of the mind-waves has a definite goal. It is a method which helps us to arrive at the point where we may gain Knowledge of the Reality, for when the mind is stilled in regard to all that is not God, God is revealed in the mind. In the imagery of St John of the Cross 'the resplendent sun rises on the horizon at the same time that the dark night ends'.

Writing of 'meditation' according to the great Spanish mystic and in parallel, the author says:

In the Catholic tradition, the Mother Church is the mediator between the soul and God: it plays the role of the guru. The Holy Church is the guru, the Holy Church is the Faith. When the grace of the guru is awakened in the heart of the disciple, the former man dies in him. We read in the Gita:

The recollected mind is awake
 In the knowledge of the Atman
 Which is dark night to the ignorant:
 The ignorant are awake in their sense-life
 Which they think is daylight:
 To the seer it is darkness.

Such parallels between Eastern and Western Mysticism, and indeed the study of true mysticism itself, still await a far more profound study of the mysticism of the Mystical Body. In order to assess the full value of the writings of St John of the Cross we should see them against the background of the deep, mystical doctrine of the Church. An article in the March issue of *Spiritual Life* (Brookline, U.S.A.) aroused our hopes in this direction by its title, 'The Mystical Body of Christ and the Spiritual Life'. The good sister who writes the article is on the right lines:

Foundation doctrines for a sound spirituality especially applicable in our day are the doctrine of the Mystical Body and its personal and social applications, the priesthood of the laity, a knowledge of the office of Christ as mediator, a deep awareness of the Holy Sacrifice

of the Mass as the official worship of Christ and his members, the life-giving sacramental system, and the sanctifying power of the Church's Year.

But the author contents herself with quotations from the great encyclicals on these subjects, encyclicals which give us the principles from which we are expected to draw out the applications. And in this matter of the spiritual and mystical life there are indeed very profound applications. Before we can appreciate the teaching of St John of the Cross we must study it in relation to the unity of the Mystical Body where the 'unitive way' finds its proper setting. When we have discovered this true setting we can go on to compare the teaching with that of other 'mystics' and spiritual writers.



REVIEWS

LA VIE DE LA LITURGIE. Par Louis Bouyer. (Editions du Cerf.)

I divide my review copies of books into two kinds: those I promptly dispose of, at a profit if possible, and those I place on my bookshelves. Father Bouyer's book will be in the latter group, and it will not stay long on the shelves either. It is a book one can't leave alone because it has all the adornments a fine book should have. It is at once scholarship and poetry and it has many human graces that make direct contact with that creature described as the common reader. At the beginning of the book he tells us how Saint Francis de Sales, when he was consecrated bishop, made a good resolution always to say his rosary if duty obliged him to attend a High Mass. Well, there's something to think about, and think about it we do, because Father Bouyer is not just another angry young man denouncing the bad old days. He is a scholar showing us right and wrong notions of liturgy. There is, of course no need to talk of Father Bouyer's scholarship; it is now well known. But it is scholarship with a difference: not only is there the subtle art of beguiling the reader into turning over the page, there is also the art of bringing the reader down to earth. If we are ever tempted to drift away into hazy speculations we shall have a nasty shock. For instance, 'Peut-être le plus grand, et certainement le plus difficile problème pour la piété liturgique est-il celui que nous attend quand nous sortons de l'église après la célébration'. It is a very good thing to be reminded that living the liturgy means practising outside church the charity we have pledged in the Eucharist.

This book is also scholarship with poetry. Poetry is the utterance of wisdom, i.e. the gift of wisdom, and the poet sees, in a measure, from the viewpoint of God. He connects past and present, time and eternity,