

OBITER

LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN, the Cambridge philosopher who died last year, is the subject of an article in the December *World Review* by Maurice Cranston, which concludes:

'He had been baptised a Roman Catholic. I think it is true to say that in the end he had come to believe in the Roman Catholic faith. This sounds, perhaps, surprising. But not so very surprising. Analysis had demolished metaphysics. Wittgenstein accepted what was left—first science, then mysticism, and finally religion.'

We are informed by a Catholic who knew Wittgenstein up to the time of his death, and who may claim to be a faithful interpreter of his mind, that there is no truth in this. 'It is quite common', she writes, 'to ascribe some kind of "mysticism" to him. Though it is difficult to know what people mean by saying this, it is equally difficult to find a sense for it in which there is any truth in it either. A certain amount of interest in, and thought about, religion hardly qualifies for the name, even if the thought is not hostile in spirit. Wittgenstein's own remarks about "the mystical" at the end of his *Tractatus* may have contributed to the description of "mysticism" to his thought, mainly because they are difficult to understand.'

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ART AND RELIGION are nowadays unhappy partners, if indeed they are not altogether divorced. Professor Emile Cammaerts, in an admirably illustrated article, writes of the possibility of their reconciliation in the December number of *The Studio*. In the same issue there is an editorial discussion of Basil Spence's design for the new Anglican Cathedral at Coventry. The defects of Mr Spence's design, as Mr John Betjeman has pointed out, spring from the conditions set by those responsible for the competition, which in turn reflect all too faithfully the contemporary religious temper. 'They were so anxious that the building should be all things to all men that it expresses not a firm faith but a woolly goodwill.' But the Editors of *The Studio* seem to think that 'the problem of the designer of a Cathedral is to crystallise the interpretation of our time, and first must come the interpretation itself'. This seems a heavy addition to an architect's responsibilities, and if the new Coventry Cathedral will indeed look like the exhibition building its critics fear, then here is further proof that with churches, as with much else besides, it is their purpose that alone gives point to their planning.