

On page 345, ll. 7-10, Koetschau, following Delarue, gives us a sentence which will tax most readers' ingenuity to the uttermost. I propose to read as follows: ὁ μέντοι βαττολογῶν ἐν τῷ εὐχισθαι ἤδη καὶ ἐν τῷ (MS ἐν τῷ) χείρονι τῶν προειρημένων ἡμῖν συναγωγικῶν (so *edd.*: MS -κῶς) ἐστὶ καταστάσει, χαλεπωτέρῃ τε (MS τε χαλεπωτέρῃ) τῶν ἐν ταῖς πλατείαις γωνιῶν ὁδῶν, οὐδὲ ἔχρος σφύων κἂν ὑποκρίσεως ἀγαθοῦ. Origen is referring to Mt. vi 5 which he has previously quoted, and the sense of the passage is 'he who babbles in praying is already even in some worse position than the synagogue frequenters we have referred to, and on a harder road than the corners of streets.' Koetschau reads ἐν τῇ . . . συναγωγικῇ ἐστὶ καταστάσει τε καὶ χαλεπωτέρῃ κτέ.

Lovers of Origen will be thankful for the considerable help afforded to them by these volumes; but we must frankly confess that their chief value is that they will lighten the labours of whoever is to prepare a really satisfactory edition of these works.

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## TWO BOOKS ON MYSTICISM.

*Christian Mysticism: The Bampton Lectures for 1899.* By W. R. INGE, M.A., Fellow of Hertford College. (Methuen & Co., 1899.)

*Unity in Diversity: five addresses delivered in the Cathedral Church of Christ, Oxford, during Lent, 1899.* By CHARLES BIGG, D.D. (Longmans, Green & Co., 1899.)

UNTIL the other day the English reader who wished for a general account of Christian mysticism in his own language had to be content with Vaughan's *Hours with the Mystics*. In the *Bampton Lectures for 1899* Mr. Inge has superseded that work—whose genuine merits and glaring defects he excellently summarizes on pp. 347, 348—by one dealing with the same subject, but far the superior of its predecessor in seriousness of thought, reverence of tone, and dignity of style.

In reviewing a work on Christian Mysticism it is inevitable that we should ask at the outset what the author means by Mysticism. Few words are more variously or more vaguely used, and nothing would be more welcome to the student of philosophy and theology than a definition which would really apply to all those whose claim to the name no one disputes, and at the same time would clearly indicate what it is which is common to them and distinguishes them from others to whom the name would less readily be given. That Mr. Inge has done this, however, it is impossible to allow. He has collected in an Appendix a number of definitions of Mysticism by previous writers. This

Appendix, by the way, would be far more useful than it is, were the full references to the somewhat oddly arranged quotations added; and it may be said at once here, that the absence of references is a grave defect in Mr. Inge's book as a whole. He has, moreover, given two definitions of his own on p. 5. These two definitions, though Mr. Inge appears to regard them as differing only verbally from one another, are in fact by no means identical in meaning; and neither of them is free from obscurity. The second, which runs thus, 'the attempt to realize, in thought and feeling, the immanence of the temporal in the eternal, and of the eternal in the temporal,' provokes the inquiry—by no means unimportant—whether an 'attempt to realize' this in thought, but not in feeling—or in feeling, but not in thought—would be called by Mr. Inge Mysticism; whether if realization *in thought* is essential, ecstasy would not be excluded; or if realization *in feeling*, apart from thought, is sufficient, whether realization *in thought*, apart from feeling, would be sufficient also. The answers given to these questions could not but profoundly affect the treatment of the subject. Again, the first definition, which is thus stated, 'the attempt to realize the presence of the living God in the soul and in nature,' can scarcely be treated as merely equivalent to the second. *Must* 'the eternal' be conceived of as a 'living God'? is the antithesis of 'soul' and 'nature' within 'the temporal' necessary to Mysticism?

Were I myself writing a book on Mysticism, I might, no doubt, be asked to frame a better definition; but it is the privilege of a reviewer to point out defects in what he reviews without being bound to amend them; and in this privilege (which makes my task much easier) I intend to take refuge.

Mysticism would seem to be hard to define, largely because it is an ambiguous term. It may be the name of a temperament, of a side or aspect of thought, or, again, of a philosophical system. We may neglect the unprofitable and inaccurate uses of the word by authors who use it where 'religion,' or where 'magic' would do as well. A theory of the world may fairly be called Mysticism, in which the ultimate truth and reality of things is held to be a unity, the consciousness of which is attainable as a feeling inexpressible by thought. Such a theory will be held by persons who have felt such a consciousness attained, or on the way to be attained, in their own experience. But this experience can exist, where the temperament which renders it possible is present, without leading to the explicit statement of a theory suggested by it: and great philosophers or great poets may understand and divine, or even share, such an experience, may call it as a witness to some truth of which it has a presentiment, or may describe it in verse, and yet not be adequately described as Mystics themselves. To Plato, despite the fre-

quent use of his name by mystics, the term Mystic is quite inappropriate. For him the philosopher's inspiration is above the obscure presentiments of the prophet's; comparison with the *Republic*, even careful consideration of the *Phaedrus* itself, shows that the expressions of the latter dialogue must not be taken as literally as might be the case with a less profoundly humorous author than Plato. If, again, Plato speaks elsewhere of the supreme unity as transcending knowledge and being, what he indicates by such language is that the contrast of knowing and being presupposes a unity within which the contrast falls, rather than that the opposition is to vanish in an ecstatic apprehension of that unity, other and higher than apprehension by reason. Hegel, again, is not a mystic, in spite of his willing recognition of the testimony borne by mystics to the truth that the distinctions of the abstract understanding were not absolute. Least of all men did he look on an immediate apprehension as higher than a mediate, than one thought out. What God gave to His beloved in sleep, he significantly said, was mostly dreams. But if it would be misleading to call Plato and Hegel mystics, still less, perhaps, is there any propriety in applying the name to such writers as the Cambridge Platonists, whom, nevertheless, Mr. Inge regards as the very flower of English mysticism. Here Vaughan, who will go no further than to admit that 'a vein of mysticism peeps out here and there in their writings' (*Hours with the Mystics* p. 315), seems to judge more truly than Mr. Inge. The Cambridge Platonists were men who united an idealistic philosophy with deep personal piety; and in the case of Henry More, also with a love of the fantastic and the supernatural, which only a very low conception of what mysticism means—a conception as far as possible removed from Mr. Inge's—would consider as giving any claim to the name. Mr. Inge is not usually inclined, when he finds a spirit of inward devoutness, straightway to call it mystical—thus he has some excellent remarks (p. 194) on the *Imitation of Christ* as 'not, properly speaking, a mystical treatise'—but he is perhaps more ready to find mysticism wherever he finds idealistic philosophy. Would he call Thomas Hill Green a mystic? He was surely as much so as Whichcote or John Smith. And it is difficult to suppose that even the temperament of the mystic can be rightly attributed to Henry More, who reckons up the essential mystical theologumena among the ravings of enthusiasm, and as no whit more important than the notions peculiar to Behmen's cosmology with which he associates them (*Enthusiasmus Triumphatus* § lxiv). No true mystic could have thus treated the expressions, 'That all is God's self,' 'That man's self is God, if he live holly'; although he might have taken exception to the wording. More's respect for Behmen's personal character cannot counterbalance this. It is significant that he was more inclined to see

inspiration in Descartes (one of the least mystical of thinkers) than in Behmen (*Defence of the Philosophick Cabbala*, Appendix, c. 1). His affinities with Behmen, if he has any, are to be sought elsewhere; namely, in the external resemblance between the mythological form in which Behmen presented his genuinely mystical apprehensions, and the very unmystical particularity with which More delights to describe the spirit-world, as existing not so much within as side by side with that of which our senses give us cognisance, and which the natural sciences explore. It is all the more strange that Mr. Inge should have gone to the Cambridge Platonists for the finest examples of *Christian* mysticism, when the Neoplatonic phraseology, the frequent use of which by them seems to have suggested the ascription of mysticism to them, is almost invariably drawn without alteration from non-Christian sources, and with very little indication that any difference was felt between the spirit of the last stages of the pagan and that of the Christian theology. This criticism is of course quite compatible with full recognition of the genuinely Christian character of their personal religion, and of the great service rendered to the Church of England in the Restoration period by the example given in the characters of men like Whichcote and John Smith of the union of philosophical breadth of view and high culture with unworldly earnestness in the spiritual life.

It was said above that not only great philosophers but great poets might enter into the mystic phase of feeling, and give it expression, without themselves being adequately described as mystics. This branch of the subject is especially well treated by Mr. Inge. No part of his lectures surpasses in interest the discussion of the mystical elements in Wordsworth, which constitutes perhaps his most original contribution to the study of mysticism. The mysticism of Tennyson, on which he only touches, may be further illustrated. Mr. Inge does not mention what is (as read in the light of the poet's own comment given in his *Life* ii p. 90) probably the most genuinely mystical passage in Tennyson's writings—the lines in which he makes King Arthur, at the end of the *Holy Grail*, give utterance to a profound conviction of the reality of God, based upon what may fairly be called an ecstatic experience. There is, by the way, a curiously close parallel to the famous lyric, 'Flower in the crannied wall,' in these words of Behmen, *Three Principles* ch. viii (I quote from the translation of 1648, p. 59), 'If he be born of God, he may know in every spile of grass his Creator in whom he liveth.' In the fuller and very admirable account of Wordsworth's mysticism, given by Mr. Inge, the quotations on p. 311 may also be supplemented by reference to a story, which (as I have heard) the late Professor Bonamy Price was wont to tell, of how he asked Wordsworth the meaning of 'fallings from us, vanishings—', in the *Ode on the Intima-*

*tions of Immortality*, and how Wordsworth replied by catching at a gate which was near, and saying he had sometimes to do this to assure himself of the substantiality of the material things about him, so strongly did the sense of their unreality come upon him. This is closely parallel with the experience of Tennyson mentioned above. And when Wordsworth tells us in the *Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey*—Mr. Inge quotes the passage—how in some of these ecstatic states ‘We see into the life of things,’ again we are reminded how when Behmen (I quote from the English translation of Martensen’s *Jacob Böhme*, p. 7) was ‘sitting one day in his room, his eye fell upon a burnished pewter dish, which reflected the sunshine with such marvellous splendour that he fell into an inward ecstasy, and it seemed to him as if he could now look into the principles and deepest foundations of things. He believed that it was only a fancy, and in order to banish it from his mind he went out upon the green. But here he remarked that he gazed into the very heart of things, the very herbs and grass, and that actual nature harmonized with what he had inwardly seen.’ The ecstatic state in Tennyson, according to a passage in his *Life* (i. p. 320; quoted by Mr. Inge, p. 15), was sometimes induced by the device of repeating over his own name; just as Behmen’s, in the instance quoted, was at first excited by the very ancient method, accidental in his case, of gazing at a brightly polished surface.

Mr. Inge observes (p. 313), ‘It has been said of Wordsworth, as it has been said of other mystics, that he averts his eyes “from half of human fate.” Religious writers have explained that the neglected half is that which lies beneath the shadow of the Cross. The existence of positive evil in the world, as a great fact, and the consequent need of redemption, is, in the opinion of many, too little recognized by Wordsworth, and by Mysticism in general.’ Mr. Inge combats this view, and truly observes that ‘in practice, at any rate, the great mystics have not taken lightly the struggle with the law of sin in our members, or tried to “heal slightly” the wounds of the soul.’ But he perhaps scarcely sufficiently emphasizes the fact that for many what draws them to the mystics is precisely their full appreciation of the darkest moods of the soul, the independence of their serenity upon that cheerfulness the sources of which are youth and health, which pass away, or upon the power, which some do not possess, of leaving unprobed their convictions on fundamental questions. It is significant that the great philosopher of modern times to whom the name of mystic may be most properly applied—to whom the great mystics seemed not only to have borne witness to a truth, but to have seized more truly than others the secret of existence—is the pessimist Schopenhauer. The great mystics have plucked a religion out of the heart of spiritual darkness and empti-

ness. This is the secret of their power, whether we think of those who will have no symbols, or of those who delight in them (subjective or objective mystics, as Mr. Inge, perhaps not quite happily, distinguishes them). It is impossible, indeed, to defend the exclusive claims of the *via negativa*. Though everything must be called in question—and that it must is the lesson of modern philosophy from Descartes downwards—in order that the foundation of certainty may be laid beyond the reach of question; yet what we have denied and doubted must be explained and affirmed, no longer indeed as taken on trust, but, as thought out. The way of doubt, however, must come first; and all must be lost in the Absolute, that it may be found there. So in the religious life, the mystics who would not remain content with symbols renounced, or had taken from them, all that they had, even the God of their first spiritual experiences; and through a spiritual abnegation, a spiritual poverty, a spiritual death, bitterer than those of the body, found all that they had lost, and more than they had lost, in the God to a sense of whom this practical *via negativa* conducted them. So again, if we may criticize, as we may, the statements of Behmen about the dark *centrum naturae* in God, yet Hegel was right in recognizing a profound philosophical insight in them; and the value of Behmen as a religious guide lies also just in his power to communicate to others his own sense of a God, who is not merely over against the world of pain and evil as light over against darkness, but has taken up into Himself that which out of Him is pain and evil, but in Him is an element never independent, yet ever present in His eternal life of victorious blessedness. Emerson, whom Mr. Inge, though sensible of the absence in him of that air of ‘having been in hell’ which commonly marks the true mystic, calls ‘the great American mystic’ (p. 320), appears like an amateur and a pretender by the side either of St. John of the Cross or of Behmen. This is not so indeed with Wordsworth, who ‘speaks that he has seen,’ with the solemnity of a priest indeed, but not with the affectation of a hierophant. It is true, however, of M. Maeterlinck, whom Mr. Inge mentions only as a commentator on Ruysbroek. Emerson is a thinker of richly endowed mind and master of a distinguished style: and M. Maeterlinck has a singular genius for giving expression to elusive feelings which, but for such a work as *La Mort de Tintagiles*, one would have thought it beyond the power of art to seize. But they are not of the true race of the mystics who ‘have been in hell’: Carlyle, to whom Mr. Inge (p. 320) will scarcely allow the name of mystic, is far more akin to it than either.

It would be foolish to complain that Mr. Inge has passed by some Christian mystics unnoticed: he could not notice all. But it was something of a disappointment to learn nothing from him about the

Franciscan mystics of the thirteenth century; and it would have been interesting to know how far he considers Swedenborg, Emerson's 'representative' mystic, to be entitled to the name. But Mr. Inge has given us so much that he has whetted our appetite for more, and what seems complaint is gratitude in disguise.

There are some lesser points which seem to call for comment. The passages relating to Greek philosophy are unsatisfactory. To call Heraclitus a 'great idealist' (p. 47), implies an interpretation of his philosophy which is, to say the least, open to question. The quotation from him in the passage of Eusebius given by Mr. Inge in a note, rests upon what is very possibly an entire misunderstanding of the meaning of λόγος in the original. (See the notes to Fragment 2 in Professor Bywater's edition, and Professor Burnet's *Early Greek Philosophy* p. 133.) No doubt what is more important for Mr. Inge's immediate purpose is, not Heraclitus' original meaning, but the interpretation put upon him at the beginning of the Christian era: but some hint should have been given that they may have differed. To say that 'Plato's doctrine of ideas aimed at establishing the transcendence of the highest idea—that of God' (p. 118), would never prepare one for finding that the 'idea of God' is not, under that name, to be found in Plato at all. From the account of the Aristotelian 'active intellect,' on p. 361, the reader would not know that Aristotle himself says that the νοῦς comes οὐράνιον (*De Gen. An.* 736 a, 744 b), and that this is not a mere comment of Alexander's.

On p. 195 the author of the *Imitation of Christ* is reproached for quoting with approval the 'pitiful epigram of Seneca, "Whenever I have gone among men, I have returned home less of a man."' But Tauler is guilty of just the same fault (in the *Sermon for Christmas Day*, included in Miss Winkworth's selection). Mr. Inge does not sufficiently allow for the degree to which any words of Seneca were regarded as authoritative texts in the Middle Ages. Mr. Inge has, I think, too high an opinion of M. Récéjac's *Sources de la Connaissance mystique*, a work which seems to me both obscure in style—an unusual fault in a French writer—and confused in thought. Mr. Inge notes that it differs from most mystical treatises by appealing to Kant rather than to Hegel (p. 341). Kant—of whom we are told that 'Willmann gave him friendly greeting (and was not repulsed), because he agreed in so many things with the mediaeval Mystics' (*Erdmann Hist. of Philos.* § 302. 6; Eng. tr. ii p. 427)—had certainly his points of contact with mysticism, chiefly in his insistence on the process of redemption and atonement as something which takes place within the individual's consciousness, but they are not to be found where M. Récéjac appears to seek them.

Mr. Inge's remarks on the 'mystical interpretation' of Scripture

(p. 272) are excellent ; but the suggestion of a possible defence of it on the ground that 'everything in the world, if we could see things as they are, must be symbolic of the Divine Power which made it and sustains it in being,' that 'if "one eternal purpose runs" through the ages, it must be discernible in small things as well as in great,' reminds one uncomfortably of the Stoic defence of auspices and divination mentioned by Cicero *de Divinatione*. In taking leave of Mr. Inge's lectures, some special recognition is due to the eloquent and impressive passage of general reflection, with which he closes his survey of Christian mysticism ; a passage which will long dwell in the memory of those who heard it delivered, and which breathes the true spirit of a liberal and philosophical theology.

In Lent 1899, when Mr. Inge was Bampton Lecturer, Dr. Bigg delivered in Christ Church Cathedral at Oxford a series of addresses which also touch on the subject of Christian mysticism, and which he has since published under the title *Unity in Diversity*. The purpose of these admirable addresses is practical, rather than scientific, and they were no doubt composed with an eye to the so-called 'crisis in the Church,' of which the newspapers were then full. Dr. Bigg uses the word Mystic in a very wide sense ; but he tells us plainly what that sense is. He identifies the 'mystic spirit' with the 'spirit that giveth life' in opposition to the 'letter that killeth' (p. 6). In this sense no doubt the *Confessions* of St. Augustine and the *Imitation of Christ* are rightly ranked as eminent representatives of the 'mystic spirit,' though, in a more precise sense, they are scarcely examples at all. Dr. Bigg gives to the 'two streams or tendencies of the religious life, flowing from the same source, but not always side by side,' which 'sometimes . . . exist more or less harmonized in the same community, sometimes . . . have sprung violently apart and formed different communities' (p. 24), the names of Mystic and Disciplinary. Roughly speaking, these terms, as he uses them, correspond to what some would call Protestant and Catholic ; understood, of course, as referring to tendencies rather than to formulas or organized religious bodies. The difficulty of avoiding associations, from this point of view irrelevant, while using names so familiar, is no doubt a good reason for seeking others. It is curious to contrast Dr. Bigg's nomenclature, which uses 'Mystic' to denote the tendency which produced the Protestant Reformation, and produces—at least in England and America—the perpetual disruption of Protestant bodies into smaller sects, with the exactly opposite usage of Professor Harnack, who sees in the 'mysticism' even of Tauler or the *Theologia Germanica* nothing but 'Catholic piety in general,' and will allow no relation other than that of sharpest opposition

between the mystical and evangelical spirits. No doubt this view is full of difficulties; but it seems to make 'Mystic,' to denote what Dr. Bigg intends to denote, inappropriate for the same sort of reason as 'Protestant.' For custom is lord of language; and, except 'through the looking-glass,' one cannot make words mean what one likes.

A few criticisms in detail of Dr. Bigg's book may be worth making. There is something which, in the work of one so sympathetic as Dr. Bigg, strikes one as unexpectedly irreverent in the dismissal, on p. 6, of Jacob Behmen and St. John of the Cross as 'extravagants'; and one hardly recognizes Carlyle in the company of 'the heathen philosophers' and Bishop Butler as a teacher of 'reasonable self-love,' in a sense in which it is contrasted with 'Christian self-denial.' It would be impossible to give a more misleading notion of his drift than this; every page in *Sartor Resartus* cries out against it. Lastly, on p. 9, Dr. Bigg lays it down as a general principle that 'where there is distinction there must be inequality.' He is thinking of socialistic conceptions of the State and of pantheistic conceptions of the world; but the saying in itself is difficult, and would embarrass (for example) an exponent of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity.

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