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John of the Cross: Selected Writings

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anti-critical approach is that Gooding cannot distinguish between Luke's intentions, the intentions of his sources, and the intentions of the historical Jesus, and hence fails to acknowledge, for example, the theological creativity underlying the composition of Luke or any of the other gospels. Worse still, Gooding identifies the earthly Jesus with the risen Christ at work in the church, so that Luke is found to be a proponent of Chalcedonian orthodoxy and is interpreted on that basis. Thus the infancy narrative becomes the story of the incarnation (pp. 27, 31). Other New Testament texts are used to exegete Lucan passages (e.g., p. 117). Difficult passages are toned down drastically to fit into a coherent theological system—Jesus' teeth are pulled, reducing the radical challenge of the Gospel to a commonplace cultural morality and banal theology (e.g., p. 194, where Christ's refusal to allow a would-be follower is explained in terms of the father's not yet being dead!). Even a book whose primary task is religious rather than historical instruction *must*, if we are to take *sola scriptura* at all seriously, seek first the authentic intention of the text and only then apply to it the creeds and confessions of the church. Gooding does the reverse, and his own words (p. 116) are thus a judgement against himself: "The religious mind... is interested in keeping rules; particularly the rules which spring from its own cherished interpretations of Scripture or tradition; and to these interpretations it will attribute the inflexible authority of God himself."

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Selected Works

Bernard of Clairvaux

Translation and Foreword by G.R. Evans, Introduction by Jean Leclercq, Preface by Ewert H. Cousins

New York: Paulist Press, 1987

296 pp. U.S. \$12.95

Selected Writings

John of the Cross

Edited with an Introduction by Kieran Kavanaugh, Preface by Ernest Larkin

New York: Paulist Press, 1987

326 pp. U.S. \$12.95

Without any doubt Bernard of Clairvaux and John of the Cross are, next to Augustine, the most significant figures in the history of Christian spirituality. Their inclusion in the splendid Classics of Western Spirituality series is, as a result, long overdue; the series began a decade ago.

Such a delay is explainable, however; the editors of the "Classics" have been concerned from the beginning to publish important untranslated or out-of-print texts and Bernard of Clairvaux and John of the Cross have not been in this category. The E. Allison Peers translation of John is about to reach its fortieth anniversary and in 1979 a second edition of the splendid Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez translation, *The Collected Works of John of the Cross*, appeared in a second edition (Washington, D.C.: ICS Press). Bernard of Clairvaux has been equally well served. In the early 1970s the Cistercian Institute at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan, initiated its Cistercian Fathers series, now over 30 volumes which include new and first translations of most of Bernard's major works as well as those of his colleagues William of St. Thierry and Aelred of Rievaulx among others.

Because of the importance of the Kavanaugh/Rodriguez translation, Paulist Press wisely decided not to commission a new translation of John of the Cross and has printed an edited version of that much larger work. The volume includes edited versions of all of John's major works, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, *The Dark Night of the Soul*, *The Spiritual Canticle*, and *The Living Flame of Love*. Kavanaugh's editorial choices are judicious throughout and his biographical and theological introduction provides the reader with an excellent ground from which to move into the texts and from them, should the reader so choose, on to the complete versions.

The Bernard of Clairvaux volume was under the general supervision of Gillian Rosemary Evans and provides a fine introduction to Bernard's life and spiritual teaching. It includes selections from *On Conversion*, *On the Steps of Humility and Pride*, *On Consideration*, *On Loving God*, *Sermons on the Song of Songs*, and Letters. With the exception of the last two sections, the texts are arranged to reflect the spiritual journey as Bernard understood it. The introduction is written in the same style with which readers of Evans' other books (on Gregory the Great, Anselm, Bernard, medieval biblical interpretations and the science of theology) are accustomed. The translations are all by Evans. Certainly a compendium like this is of value and is important for the "Classics" series, and the fresh translations do provide some interpretative suggestions, but it is surprising that, although all the texts (with the exception of mere seven pages of letters) have appeared in the Cistercian Fathers series, no mention of that series or of the related Cistercian Studies series is made.

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