

one of colour which informs the quality of their design, and when this is so travestied, as it is here, all is lost and several hundred thousand people have been misinformed.

Sir Herbert Read's text covers a wide area. He calls the book 'a synopsis of existing knowledge' and points out how the law of art history is one of continually recurring reaction rather than of progress; the outstanding artist seemingly born out of the blue, from whose genius springs a school doomed to decay.

Sir Herbert places the beginning of modern art with Cézanne, who in the long history of art was the first to see the world objectively, 'an object uncoloured by the bright but deceptive picture presented by the kaleidoscope of the senses', and in the course of his book, dealing with over four hundred artists, he clarifies much of the tempestuous interlocking of schools since that time.

It is to be regretted that he has not included the work of David Jones amongst British artists. Its timeless nature gives emphasis and balance to the movement of modern painting as a whole. It is odd too that since, in this book on painting, he includes the work of Brancusi (represented curiously enough by a cast which may never have been seen by Brancusi himself), he should not also mention so important and vital an influence as that of Henri Gaudier Brzeska.

There are many excellent notes at the end of the book, a helpful bibliography and careful cataloguing.

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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THOMAS. Coptic Text Established and Translated by A. Guillaumont *et al.* (Collins; 18s.)

By now most people know that the so-called *Gospel of Thomas* is one of the most important of the forty-nine Gnostic treatises discovered by chance in 1945 at Nag Hamadi in Upper Egypt. In its final form it comprises a collection of what purport to be about 114 'Sayings of Jesus' translated into Coptic from a much older Greek version, which was apparently written about 140 A.D. Strongly Gnostic in outlook, this Greek prototype had apparently absorbed, adapted and added to two still more ancient and less Gnostic collections of sayings, the earlier of which may stand very near indeed to the authentic tradition of our Lord's teaching, and to the pre-gospel traditions on which the authors of our canonical gospels are known to have drawn.

A full critical edition of *The Gospel of Thomas* is to be published in the near future. Meanwhile the team of scholars officially engaged on the task provide an excerpt from their forthcoming work: a transcription of the Coptic text itself, with parallel English translation, to furnish their fellow scholars with 'a preliminary working tool for purposes of instruction and research'. The work has been admirably done, and will certainly achieve the limited objective of the authors. But for their interpretation and their answer to the many questions of burning interest to which this discovery has given rise, the layman will have to wait a little longer, until the complete work appears.

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