

also much of the *cafard* which enthusiasts seem to woo, 'excessive fastings, night-vigils and other severe exercises, by which a man becomes unbalanced and his senses perverted' (page 67). Much of his teaching reminds one of Ruysbroek's, and he may indeed have known the German translation of *The Spiritual Espousals* which was made in its author's lifetime: the end of II ii 3, the passage beginning 'Should the soul empty herself of all intermediate things . . .' (page 135), has a distinct echo of the concluding sentences of the *Espousals*. And throughout the *Book* shows that it was written by a connoisseur of mystical literature, for readers with similar tastes. Though it is claimed in this present edition that the Friends of God aimed 'at affective contemplation, not mystical brain-work' (page 16), the *Book* is still a very advanced and sophisticated performance, an interesting and important memorial of that strange borderland between sanctity and error in which so many of the Rhineland mystics wandered. As Mr Kelley reminds us, it was Tauler who said in one of his sermons: 'A well-loved master has written and preached to you concerning this mystic union with God, and you did not understand him. He spoke in terms of eternity and you understood in terms of time.' This quotation does certainly illustrate Tauler's awareness of the dangers of undue popularization of mystical union; but it also illustrates Tauler's abiding reverence for Eckhart's memory. He and Suso—and Ruysbroek too—never ceased to honour Eckhart as the master from whom they had learned divine wisdom: and in assessing the good and the harm which Eckhart did, scholars will do well to take account also of *The Book of the Poor in Spirit*.

ERIC COLLEDGE

AQUINAS. By F. C. Copleston. (Penguin Books; 3s. 6d.)

Fr Copleston set himself a difficult but most important task when he attempted, in a book of this size, a precise account of the major aspects of Aquinas' philosophical thought; I do not know that it has been tried before in English, and certainly it has never been done so well. Part of the difficulty in putting over the philosophy of Aquinas is that it is mixed in with a much greater quantity of theology, and even when separated out, as in Fr Gilby's *Philosophical Texts*, it needs careful explanation if the modern reader is not to misunderstand statements so deceptively simple, and a method of presentation so alien to anything he knows. There are enough books about thomism, but these contain developments and interpretations of the original thought; Fr Copleston sets out to tell us just what Aquinas himself has said.

An important introductory chapter successfully justifies this whole manner of philosophizing, against a variety of modern criticisms. It is

shown how metaphysical truths are reached without any appeal to special experiences, since they are due to reflection on what is implicitly known by all; and Aquinas' method is seen to have much in common with the present fashion of linguistic analysis. But Fr Copleston, exercising his historical tact, for the most part remains happily free from the jargons of either Aquinas' century or his own.

The succeeding chapters contain a straightforward and admirably compressed account of Aquinas' thought. First his metaphysics, avoiding the usual confusion with post-Cartesian notions of substance, or the mistakes about the real distinction of essence and existence. Then a chapter on theism, with a sympathetic discussion of the five ways, and, reaching firmer ground, chapters on psychology and ethics. Finally the delicate matter of thomist developments is treated, with a too-brief mention of the revival of logic, and some excellent remarks on a possible meaning to be attached to the phrase 'perennial philosophy'.

Minor criticisms could of course be made; anachronistic ideas and terminology occur from time to time, as in the translation of *per se nota* by 'self-evident'; the occasional use made of the term 'contingent'; the 'principle of causality'; occasional fumbblings, as with the problem of evil. But the opinions of author and reviewer could hardly be expected to coincide over so wide a field. The only criticism that could be pressed home concerns the inadequate bibliography. If there are few good English books on Aquinas' philosophy, there are some excellent articles in journals; and in French there are plenty of books. Fr Copleston has missed an opportunity here; those who will meet the real Aquinas for the first time in his pages should also have been shown the way to advance beyond this best of introductions.

LAURENCE BRIGHT, O.P.

AN EXISTENTIALIST THEOLOGY. By John Macquarrie. (S.C.M. Press; 18s.)

ETHICS. By Dietrich Bonhoeffer. (S.C.M. Press; 21s.)

ON AUTHORITY AND REVELATION: THE BOOK ON ADLER, OR A CYCLE OF ETHICO-RELIGIOUS ESSAYS. By Soren Kierkegaard. (Princeton University Press; London: Geoffrey Cumberlege; 36s.)

The first two volumes to be issued in the *Library of Philosophy Theology* being published by the S.C.M. Press are a remarkable beginning to this series which, in the words of its general editor, 'desires to offer a meeting place for the thought of contemporary theologians and philosophers, Continental and Anglo-Saxon'.

Dr Macquarrie's book is itself the product of an encounter such as those for which this series is meant to provide a forum. It is a study of Rudolf Bultmann's theology in terms of the conceptual structure bor-