

ing remarks. The trend of these is to suggest that he is unwilling to concede to human intellectual activity at work on the content of revelation, accepted in faith, a vital and extensive rôle in Christian contemplation as this has been classically understood. To the present reviewer it seems that some of Dr Kroner's remarks (cf., e.g., pp. 7, 24, 56-59) imply a misunderstanding of the task of theological thinking, and of the relation of *datum* (revelation) to the means of deepening insight into this *datum* (speculation, reflection) in its exercise. The second volume of this interesting study should confirm or dispel these suspicions, and is to be eagerly awaited.

R. A. MARKUS

MEISTER ECKHART: An Introduction to the Study of his Works, with an Anthology of his Sermons. By James M. Clark. (Thomas Nelson; 25s.)

To put first things first, we have here twenty-five sermons, the greater number of those composed in German which can still with confidence be attributed to Eckhart, superbly translated into a living English which yet has scrupulous regard for the letter of the text. One could not wish to see this part of the work better done; nor should Professor Clark's easy, happy style make his readers forget the great labour that has been spent.

Yet every page of the English versions bristles with difficulties. One may take as a single instance the opening sentences of Sermon II, *Intravit Iesus in quoddam castellum . . .*: 'I have quoted a text taken from the Gospel, first in Latin. When translated, it runs thus: "Our Lord Jesus Christ went up into a small town, and was received by a virgin. . . ." "Virgin" simply means a person who is free from all strange images, as free as he was when he did not exist.' To these words the editor has had to supply three footnotes to indicate the play in the German on *empfangen*, with its double meaning 'received' and 'conceived', the sense in which 'images' is used and the implication for scholastic philosophers of statements concerning man's nature before his existence. This is no extreme example, and it serves to show that Eckhart neither thought nor spoke in generally comprehensible terms. The editor touches on the necessity always of remembering the highly specialized audiences for whom he preached, though the point still needs elaboration and emphasis: and yet we know from Tauler's words to the same audiences that they had not understood aright what Eckhart tried to teach. It was perhaps his tragedy and his undoing that he was so greatly gifted as a preacher, that he employed a manner as complex and difficult as his doctrine. Clark remarks on his fatal propensity to paradox, and writes of him as 'the victim of his own

style'. (How far this style was his own invention we cannot say: when the editor writes of his enriching of 'a simple peasant *patois*', he must know that such remarks are essentially conjectural and provisional. Had we records, for example, of St Albert's German colloquies, Eckhart might appear, as a stylist as in so many other ways, as his pupil and heir.) If all his works, Latin and German, had survived, or if he had been able to control and supervise the publication of his sermons, these might have come down to us pruned and glossed as, we cannot doubt, in later life he wished to see them. We may regret that this present work does not include a selection from the Latin sermons, for Clark rightly stresses their value, and points out the shortcomings of such scholars as von Hügel, who relied solely on the vernacular texts; elsewhere he aims some shrewd blows at those friends from whom he would save Eckhart, and comments on the unfortunate predilection of British and American scholars for the works which can be shown to be spurious. Here one may perhaps enter a caution: however much we applaud the demonstration that Eckhart was not a 'Friend of God' as that term has come to be understood, and not the author of works such as *Sister Katrei*, we shall do well to avoid the assumption that because such spuria are spurious they are necessarily heretical. When Clark calls Katrei's famous remark 'Rejoice with me, I have become God' 'blasphemous nonsense', he is showing the same prejudice which he complains of in others: as he himself elsewhere remarks, 'Reformers always tend to exaggerate'. Yet none the less one is forced to sympathize with his plea 'that the whole ramshackle edifice of Eckhartian studies in this country and in the United States . . . be pulled down and a fresh start made'. We are still waiting for the completion of the new critical edition of the German and Latin works; it will be of interest to see how Clark's criteria of genuineness will apply to the various manuscript traditions as they are exposed. One such criterion deserves our careful consideration, the appearance in attributed works of doctrines which had been papally condemned, for this raises a vital question, never explored, that of the disposition and intention of those scribes, Dominicans and others, who continued to copy and publish the sermons after the promulgation of *In agro dominico*. Then, too, one would wish to know what sort of defence was put up when Eckhart's doctrine was on trial. Had he had a Master of the Sacred Palace to defend him, as St Bridget later was to be championed, the case against him might well have been dropped in Cologne and have never reached its appeal stage at Avignon. As we read Torquemada's bland attributions of Bridget's 'heresies' to the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, we must enquire why a process which similarly unknowingly attributed heresy to St Augustine among

others (Clark pp. 66, 200: *Deutsche Werke* i, 184: P.L., 32, 1259) prospered as it did, and, even more, how it was possible for a judgment to be passed at Avignon which manifestly was formed upon an inspection only of the prosecution dossier. Two examples which emerge from a reading of this present work may be quoted. In 1326 Eckhart had absolutely denied at Cologne having said that men are transformed or converted into God (p. 22); yet the bull repeats this charge (article 10, p. 255) and condemns the utterance as heretical (on p. 24, the editor in his analysis of the bull has transposed the articles condemned and those merely 'deplored'). Was Avignon able to take account of Eckhart's denial? Again, the second supplementary article, also among those condemned, 'That God is neither good nor better nor the best . . .' (p. 257) also appears in this new edition in its context in Sermon XVII: 'God is not good, nor better, nor best of all. . . And yet God says: "No-one is good, save God alone"' (p. 207). It was the literal sense of these propositions which was condemned, as the editor points out, but in this case the condemnation was only achieved through ignorance of the literal sense of the proposition's context. No Catholic may question the condemnation of any teacher who taught those doctrines described in the bull: but the time is surely not now far off when we must ask again how far the surviving, rediscovered evidence shows that Eckhart did so teach. As David Knowles points out in his too little known essay, 'Some Recent Advance in the History of Medieval Thought', Eckhart's spiritual descendants were holy men of God and teachers of divine truth who today redeem for us the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. *Numquid colligunt de spinis uvas, aut de tribulis ficus?*

ERIC COLLEGE

LATE MEDIEVAL MYSTICISM. By Ray C. Petry. The Library of Christian Classics, vol. XIII. (S.C.M. Press; 35s.)

This anthology of medieval mystics edited by the Professor of Church History at Duke University (California) covers the period between St Bernard of Clairvaux and St Catherine of Genoa, including the Victorines, St Bonaventure, Ramon Lull, Master Eckhart and a number of others. While admitting the difficulty of selecting representative passages from the works of these writers it is nevertheless hard to see why St Bonaventure, for example, should be represented only by snippets from *The Journey of the Mind to God* and Ruysbroeck only by *The Sparkling Stone*, to mention but a few questionable selections. The Introductions to the various authors, though fairly adequate in subject matter, are marred by such a uniformly dreadful American style as to make them almost unreadable on this side of the Atlantic. To give but a few random examples: Suso's spiritual daughter,