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vics pin their faith. (For not even Socratov in a tight corner is above these bourgeois superstitions.) I mean that attitude to religion which regards revelation, irrespective of its objective truth or untruth, as a means merely of satisfying our emotional demands : I mean that subjectivism, the universal heresy of the day, which is answerable as much for the Anti-God of Bolshevism as for the Anti-God of the Bourgeois.

J. F. T. PRINCE.

MEDIAEVAL STUDIES¹

John Scotus Erigena has long been a problem to historians and philosophers alike. His history has been obscured in a mass of conflicting legends. He has been considered as a heretic (*licet sapiens, haereticus tamen*), as the most dangerous of philosophers, as a famous doctor, as a great Abbot, as a Saint and a Martyr whose name even figured for a little while in the Roman Martyrology. Some have fancied him to have been a pupil of St. Bede the Venerable and of Alcuin ; others made him King Alfred's councillor and founder of the University of Oxford, while others credited him with the erection of that of Paris. His thought has likewise been a subject of contradictory statements. On the one hand, he is looked upon as the equal of St. Bonaventure and Dante, the first of the Scholastics and Mystics, and the Father of speculative theology ; on the other, as ' the Father of the anti-Scholastics and the most prominent of them,' a monist, a pantheist, freethinker, rationalist, the Father of modern philosophy, the forerunner of Descartes, Spinoza, Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel.

Few have hitherto succeeded in disentangling truth from falsity, history from legend. In spite of all the difficulties of his task, Dom M. Cappuyns has given us a very thorough, comprehensive and dispassionate study.² Tracing Erigena's life, works and thought in fully documented chapters, he covers the whole field of his activity and influence.

Born in Ireland in the first decades of the ninth century, Erigena, after some elementary studies at home, passed over into Gaul. Attached to the Court of Charles the Bald, he was entrusted during the King's life with the Palace school. Against the accepted view, Dom Cappuyns shows that, the question of Predestination excluded, he did not take any effective part in

¹ Under the heading *Mediaeval Studies*, we hope to publish each month an authoritative notice of technical studies in mediæval philosophy and theology.—Ed.

² M. CAPPUYNS, O.S.B. : *Jean Scot Erigène. Sa Vie, Son Œuvre, Sa Pensée*. Abbaye du Mont César : Paris, Desclée de Brouwer. Louvain.

the theological controversies of his time. His literary activity is manifold. Up to about 860, he devoted himself to grammar and Latin authors and to translations from the Greek into Latin, while in his last years he was concerned with theological studies. His writings, in prose as well as in verse, embrace, besides the translations, commentaries, controversial and original works. With keen critical acumen Dom Cappuyns discusses the problem of their authenticity, rejecting some usually attributed to him and establishing rigorously as authentic the translation of St. Gregory of Nyssa's *De Imagine* (of which he discovered the text) and St. Epiphanius' *Ancoratus*.

By far the most important part of the book is that concerned with the study of Erigena's thought. It is a full, clear and concise synthesis of his doctrine in all its implications, correcting many misrepresentations and introducing new points of view. He rightly insists that the misunderstanding of Erigena's teaching is mainly due to the fact that he has been regarded as an independent philosopher, alien to Religion, reducing it to a myth and explaining away its symbolism. This view is wrong. Erigena is a theologian, who endeavours to expound the Scriptures and doctrines of Faith by the study of the Fathers and by reason. The autonomy of reason is in no way opposed to the authority of the Scriptures, which is always supreme and unassailable; it is exercised only when there is freedom of choice in consequence of conflicting interpretations of the Fathers, but here too divine illumination remains supreme.

In contrast to the presuppositions of centuries, a careful and objective study of Erigena's chief work, *De Divisione Naturae*, has led Dom Cappuyns to stress the fact that John the Scot is not a freethinker or a rationalist, even in the most mitigated sense of the word. The accusation of pantheism is again without serious foundation. Undoubtedly, Erigena is inclined to paradoxes and to esoteric theorizing; his terminology is sometimes unusual and often carries a different meaning from the accepted one; moreover, his theological vocabulary is defective and inconsistent. But this said and granted, he is far from being the heterodox monist of whom we read in many a history of philosophy. Strictly attached to his Greek sources, the Pseudo-Dionysius and Maximus the Confessor, his monism is the Christian form of the neo-Platonic monism expressed in a defective Latin terminology. The unity between God and his creatures in this Christian monism is not identity; the individuality of substances is not denied; it is in fact a resolution of the theory of Ideas. It is, Dom Cappuyns tells us, a monism in line with the doctrine of exemplarism (*monisme exemplariste*).

Being neither a philosopher, strictly speaking, nor a ration-

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alistic pantheist, Erigena loses his main claims to originality. Yet, he strove to harmonize and unite the various doctrines of his sources in a synthesis, imperfect perhaps, but not inconsistent; and in opposition to the fragmentary essays and florilegia of his time, he left a real *Summa* of theology, in plan and in thought till then unknown to the West.

This is no more than a merest hint of the value, richness and interest of this work. Every student will find Dom Cappuyns an indispensable authority on this period.

The Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto, among other activities, has begun a series of translations. The latest is the treatise *On the Humanity of Christ* from St. Thomas's *Compendium Theologiae*.¹ In the earlier MSS. this Opusculum usually bears the title, *Compendium of Theology. A Brief Compilation of Theology for Friar Reginald, his most dear Friend*, and was written by Aquinas in his last years as a tribute of friendship to Reginald of Piperno, O.P., his secretary and *socius*. St. Thomas planned the work under three main divisions: Faith, Hope and Charity. But his death in 1274 left the treatise unfinished at the tenth chapter of Part II. In the Introduction the translator gives a good analysis of the whole work. The book is printed in bold type, and there is a useful index. We hope it will enjoy a wide circulation, and we endorse the translator's statement: 'Written for Brother Reginald and for those others who might wish a handy synopsis of Christian doctrine, it would serve to-day as an excellent catechism for advanced students.'

The Dominican Institute of St. Sabina has undertaken a critical edition of the Latin works of Eckart, the famous Dominican German Doctor of the fourteenth century. The first fascicule, containing *The Commentary on the Lord's Prayer*, has now been published.² The edition is entrusted to Dr. R. Klibansky, well known as the editor of the works of Cardinal Nicholas Cusa, and maintains the high standard of scholarship which we associate with his name. The concise Preface is of real value. The critical apparatus is threefold: in the first are given the *lectiones variantes*; in the second, the quotations and

¹ R. J. DUNN, M.A.: *St. Thomas Aquinas The Compendium Theologiae* (Part I, Tractate 2). Translated from the Latin. (St. Michael's College Philosophical Texts). Toronto, Canada, 1934. Pp. 194; 90 cents.

² R. KLIBANSKY: *Magistri Eckardi Opera Latina auspiciis Institutii Sanctae Sabinae ad Codicum fidem edita. I: Super Oratione Dominica*. Lipsiae, F. Meiner. Pp. xviii-18. RM. 2.50; in subscription RM. 1.80.

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sources used by Eckart; and in the third, the references to his other works, or to derivatives. The work is a model of a critical edition, and it would be hard to exaggerate its value.

DANIEL A. CALLUS, O.P.

THE PLAY

IF Toscanini—who, praise be ! will be with us again in June—is the prince of conductors, it is in virtue not of any particular effects or personal renderings, but of a clarity of exposition rooted in profound understanding, a surety of phrasing and emphasis in which every detail has its full and proportionate significance, so that the work as the composer conceived it speaks through him, in ideal perfection.

It was precisely some such qualities as these that struck me as the rarest merit of Gielgud's *Hamlet* at the New Theatre. In no play can the temptation be greater for an actor to seek a purely personal triumph—as Mosievitch did, to take an extreme example, moulding and mutilating to suit his conception. Instead, John Gielgud lets the play speak for itself as fully as imaginative and respectful meditation on every line of the actual text will enable, and in such a manner that reason is satisfied at every stage. Thus presented, Hamlet's behaviour appears no 'problem,' but natural, almost inevitable. In Gielgud's sensitive, straightforward rendering Hamlet deliberately feigns his madness; making it obvious that for one so shaken thus to feign was to walk a perilous border, with temptation willingly to overstep it (like Pirandello's *Enrico Quarto*) in escape. The words justify him, every line.

With a like surety Jessica Tandy's Ophelia, (very young, with a touch of modern boyishness not amiss in a part originally written for a boy's playing) is moulded to Laertes' words :

Thought and affliction, passion, Hell itself,
She turns to favour and to prettiness.

Thus her mad scene is rendered with a quiet pathos, unusual but surely right.

One may note again how in Polonius supposed contradictions vanish, when we see him as one of those worldly-wise old courtiers familiar in Elizabethan portraiture, who filled their journals with high-sounding moral maxims. The pattern of the play is still further clarified by the treatment of minor *motifs*, delicately picked out and woven into continuity—the recurrent contrast, for instance, between young Fortinbras, the man of action, and Hamlet, a captive in a world of shadows, striving in vain to dominate events too potent for his control; or the tender friendship between Hamlet and Horatio, that forms a