

As a Dominican, schooled in the same forms of life that shaped Aquinas and Eckhart, I would not want my last word to be on what is a mere speck of criticism in light of this work's excellent contribution. Aquinas and Eckhart shared a common vision best understood in their particular understanding of analogy and Dominican preaching. I give the last word to Wendlinger: '... this is the preacher's soteriological calling, to gather believers into Christ. Eckhart, through practical exercise of Aquinas' analogy, lends a new and dynamic meaning to Augustine's repose of the restless heart. The heart at rest in God is a silent heart, but not a speechless one, until it has completed its last earthly beat' (p. 189).

MICHAEL DEMKOVICH OP

EXPLORING LOST DIMENSIONS IN CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM: OPENING TO THE MYSTICAL edited by Louise Nelstrop and Simon D. Podmore, *Ashgate*, Farnham, 2013, pp. 242, £60.00, hbk

CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM AND INCARNATIONAL THEOLOGY: BETWEEN TRANSCENDENCE AND IMMANENCE edited by Louise Nelstrop and Simon D. Podmore, *Ashgate*, Farnham, 2013, pp. 256, £65.00, hbk

These two volumes contain a series of articles which grew out of a conference on Christian Mysticism held at Keble College, Oxford. They also form the first volumes in a new series, *Contemporary Theological Explorations in Christian Mystics*.

The aim of both the conference and the series is to bring mystical texts produced throughout the centuries into mainstream theological discourse, as an additional resource for the study of major theological topics. The Introduction by Louise Nelstrop sets out an overview of this project. George Pattison, in his contribution, sees mystical theology opening up theological discourse to the possibility of moving beyond a purely intellectual engagement with the divine to one that demands a response of the whole person. Oliver Davies stresses that mystical theology is much more than an intellectual apologetic or language game, while Johannes Zachhuber looks at some of the reasons for the traditional distrust of mysticism in some churches. The main ground for this distrust appears to be an assumption that a direct, personal sense of connection with God bypasses any need for solidarity with other Christians, and renders one indifferent at best to corporate forms of worship and liturgy. However, this presupposes that the God the mystic feels in touch with is not the incarnate God of the gospels, dwelling in his body, the community of Christian believers. It is therefore appropriate that the second volume is precisely on incarnational theology.

The contributors in both volumes include major established theologians, some at the cutting edge of their particular topics, such as Johannes Hoff on Nicholas of Cusa or Ben Morgan on Eckhart. There are also relative newcomers such as Philip McCosker, also writing on Cusa. They are united, however, in the tone of excitement their papers all share at exploring somewhat dangerous and easily misunderstood territory. The papers show an awareness of how the history of modern interest in mysticism, starting with William James in the early twentieth century, has bequeathed to us categories of thought and sets of terminology that, while helpful in opening up the field to modern scrutiny, can obscure for us what the mystical author is actually trying to say. Many of the papers, for instance, query the notions of gender bequeathed to us by the feminist/women's studies aspect of much of the scholarship that brought the medieval female mystics to modern attention, or the Jamesian emphasis on the private experience of the

individual. These categories and conceptual packages can be anachronistic and misleading, particularly when dealing with earlier periods.

The papers range in time from Plotinus and Gregory of Nyssa through to Heidegger, Troeltsch and the present. This range is refreshing, and reinforces the theological nature of the papers. It distinguishes these volumes from much current work on mysticism which stems from a more historical interest in the thought of particular periods, such as patristics, or has arisen from the study of the medieval vernaculars across Europe.

These two volumes represent the beginnings of a project which has much to contribute to general theological exploration and will hopefully open up exciting new horizons.

SANTHA BHATTACHARJI

T&T CLARK COMPANION TO REFORMATION THEOLOGY edited by David M. Whitford, *T&T Clark, Bloomsbury*, London, 2014, pp. x + 510, £24.99, pbk

Over the past thirty to forty years, Reformation studies have changed almost beyond all recognition. In Britain, for example, there has been a significant movement of revisionism, especially with regard to the late medieval Catholic Church and resistance to Protestantism. Political and cultural historians and commentators are exploring the multi-faceted religious and social changes of the period, analysing how the religious movements of the 16th century interact with changes in the state, economics, manners and mores.

One of the significant areas where this has been happening is in the role of women in the late medieval/early modern period. As long ago as 1986, Jean Bethke Elshtain in a thought-provoking essay on the changing status of women brought about by the views of Luther and the Reformation trauma, wrote that: 'The masculinization of theology in Protestantism, with veneration of Mary condemned as ignorant idolatry, did not usher in some glorious new day for women. Instead, it invited the loss of a female linked transcendent moment, a historic rupture we have still to explore fully' (*Meditations on Modern Political Thought* [Penn State Press 1986, p. 18]). This is relevant to this review because one of the most interesting essays in this excellent book is precisely on the changes the Reformation brought about to the role of women in Christian society. Karen E. Spierling's essay, 'Women, Marriage, and Family', is an elegant and well balanced consideration of the recent scholarship in this area, taking as her starting point the letter of Marie Dentièrre to Queen Marguerite of Navarre. (The full title of the letter in English is, 'A very useful epistle, made and composed by a Christian woman of Tournai, sent to the Queen of Navarre, sister of the King of France, against the Turks, Jews, Infidels, False Christians, Anabaptists and Lutherans'.). Dentièrre was the wife of a Reformed pastor in Geneva. Spierling makes the point that while Dentièrre was primarily defending Reformed theological positions, she first had to have a brief section on the 'Defence of Women'. The defence was primarily a reaction to, not of Catholic attitudes, but of the Reformed position that women had absolutely zero role in public teaching, scripture commentary or any sort of religious leadership; 'any obligations that women had to teach about faith were limited to the education of their children in the privacy of their homes' (p. 179). Spierling balances the essay perfectly by introducing another woman towards the end, Jeanne de Jussie, who in her *Short Chronicle* of 1535,