

the most prominent themes in the Pauline corpus. G.'s elucidation of terms like "flesh" and "spirit," "sin" and "death," and the role of the "law" with respect to freedom from the law found in Christ are to be commended. A more elaborate exploration of such essential Pauline themes as "Christ crucified" and the church as "Body of Christ" would have improved the book.

Chapter 5 looks at the Gospel and first letter of John as a spiritual response to light over darkness. G.'s evaluation of the meaning of Jesus' "signs" and the extensive use of the emphatic "I am" statements throughout the Gospel become the primary lenses through which he explores the Johannine meaning of Christ as incarnate *logos*, or Word-of-life made flesh.

The sixth and final chapter reads more like a straight summary rather than a spirituality of Acts and Revelation. Nevertheless, G.'s conclusion that Christian spirituality entails much more than a moral response to the NT witnesses, but rather a *metanoia*—a complete change of mentality and outlook, both dynamically and contemplatively—well summarizes the project of this book.

While G.'s book will not be sought out for its originality, it should certainly be recognized as a fine introduction and synthesis of NT "spiritualities" and a faithful starting point for those who wish to explore these themes further. Among the finest characteristics of the book is G.'s incorporation of scriptural citations, which are generally more extensive than one finds in most books of this genre. These frequent and lengthy citations help illustrate G.'s spiritual themes with greater clarity and beauty than shorter snippets could convey. While familiarity with these biblical texts might tempt one to skim over them, G. wants to hold them up as invitations to deeper reflection. Thus, given that the book contains no footnotes, one might have hoped to find a short list of recommendations for further reading precisely because G. invites the reader not only to further study of the spirituality of the New Testament but also to a more prayerful reflection on it.

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MEISTER ECKHART: MASTER OF MYSTICS. By Richard Woods. New York: Continuum, 2011. Pp. xv + 204. \$29.95.

Woods's book marks the 750th year of Meister Eckhart's birth—approximately speaking, since Eckhart's exact birth date is unknown. This collection of W.'s articles and lectures covers a variety of diverse topics treated by Eckhart in his German and Latin works. The volume moves from a general introduction to Eckhart to an explication of more complex theological treatments, including his doctrine of creation and

Christology. W. then focuses on some of Eckhart's more "pastoral" concerns, specifically those relating to prayer, suffering, and healing. In his epilogue, W. discusses the broad ecumenical applications of Eckhart's thought from the standpoint of not only the Eastern and Western Christian sources but also the Muslim, Jewish, and philosophical ones that Eckhart employs. W. does not neglect the "silent" or unnamed women mystics who undoubtedly influenced Eckhart, nor his wider appeal to Buddhist and Hindu readers today. However, W.'s appreciation for Eckhart's enduring relevance is not limited to his epilogue; the ways Eckhart relates to many current issues of our time is evident throughout the volume.

After providing his readers with some introductory historical background, including a brief section on factors leading to Eckhart's official condemnation, W. turns to an essay on Eckhart's relation to women mystics of his time, some of whom undoubtedly influenced him. W. writes that "it is no longer possible fully to understand or appreciate the mystical doctrine of Meister Eckhart without reference to the great women mystics who preceded him and to whose ideas he was directly or indirectly indebted" (24). The placement of this essay immediately after the introduction is interesting for two reasons. First, it follows directly upon W.'s assertion that one of the reasons Eckhart came under condemnation was his association with the Beguine movement, which had fallen into ecclesiastical disfavor. In his later essay on Eckhart's many sources, especially the Christian Neoplatonists, W. compares Eckhart's sources to Albert and Aquinas. One of the ways in which Eckhart may have significantly departed from his confreres was in his inclusion of these unnamed, albeit powerful, female voices, a point W. again raises in his epilogue (185).

Second, the women mystics' influence, particularly Hildegard of Bingen, gives rise to Eckhart's doctrine of creation, a theme with which W. seems to struggle in many of his other chapters. Thus, W.'s introduction of Eckhart's relation to these profoundly intelligent and creative women sets the trajectory for the whole book. According to W., Eckhart shares with Hildegard the imagery of the "greenness of creation" (13); however, he intentionally alters its meaning and radically departs from Hildegard (and Aquinas) regarding the doctrine of creation. W. asserts that "creatures for Eckhart have no intrinsic meaning in themselves and lack the sacramental function Hildegard and Thomas emphasized" (14). To support this claim, W. quotes from Eckhart, "All creatures are too base to be able to reveal God, they are nothing compared to God. Therefore no creature can utter a word about God in his works" (14).

An interesting inconsistency appears later in chapter 4, "On Creation: Did Eckhart Love the World?" Here W. relates Eckhart to the growing concern today over the ecological crisis, arguing that elements of Eckhart's thought can "assist us in confronting and hopefully reducing the impact of

environmental degradation” (62). In direct contradiction to what he had said earlier, W. asserts that, in line with Aquinas, Eckhart “does not lose sight of the inherent sanctity of creation, its *sacramental* [emphasis original] character as a revelation of God as creator,” and he quotes Eckhart verbatim: “Someone who knew nothing but creatures would never need to attend to any sermons, for every creature is full of God and is a book” (54–55).

W. attempts to resolve this apparent dilemma by pointing out that Eckhart often paradoxically reverses himself. “It is perhaps too easy to quote Eckhart against Eckhart. He was, after all, a dialectical thinker” (57). Rather than exploring the implications of Eckhart’s rhetorical complexity—which is one of the few weaknesses of W.’s treatment of Eckhart in this collection—he instead turns to Eckhart’s doctrine of detachment as another avenue for ecological counsel, and concludes that with “detachment as selfless commitment to contemplative action flowing from unity with God,” we may fulfill “our destiny as the Stewards of Creation” (62–63).

Despite the lack of discussion on Eckhart’s complex and dynamic rhetorical methodology, and the fact that it is a collection of diverse essays, this study maintains a surprising and engaging coherence throughout, especially with regard to Eckhart’s enduring relevance. I highly recommend the book for those seeking a novel and integrated introduction to Eckhart.

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ANASTASIA WENDLINDER

THE VOCATION OF THE CATHOLIC PHILOSOPHER: FROM MARITAIN TO JOHN PAUL II. Edited by John P. Hittinger. Washington: American Maritain Association, 2011. Pp. xxxvi + 263. \$24.95.

This fine collection of essays discusses and analyzes what the vocation of the Catholic philosopher should be in the postconciliar era (xi). Vatican II called for the renewal of the church. Both Jacques Maritain and Pope John Paul II are exemplary models for showing how to reinvigorate Christian philosophical reflection through reuniting faith and reason or spirituality and philosophy. Maritain especially wanted to avoid the extremes of the preconciliar Manicheism and the postconciliar Pelagianism (20). Both thinkers wanted to steer between the extremes of rationalism and fideism. This collection of 14 papers from diverse perspectives, which were presented at the 2005 Maritain Association conference, is a clarion call for philosophers of all stripes to return to their original vocation: the metaphysical quest for truth and the divine ground of being (xviii).

Catholic philosophers must embrace revelation and the response of faith so as to answer the call to the absolute, transcendent dimension of reality that opens up in truth, beauty, moral values, other people, and