

century still possessed close upon five hundred canons. At the time of the dissolution the last abbot of Barlings was William Mackerell, bishop of Chalcedon and auxiliary of Lincoln. He died on the scaffold in 1537, a victim of Tudor tyranny, for his complicity in the Pilgrimage of Grace. Probably like other sufferers he was offered his life if he repudiated papal supremacy. The author makes no point of this, but the reader's attention may be called to a valuable article in *Dominican Studies*, January 1949, where Father Anstruther, O.P., goes very carefully and fully into the question, and shows that at least one condemned Pilgrim, namely Dr John Pickering, priest of Lythe, received a royal pardon and was released for accepting the royal supremacy, whereas his fellows, including another John Pickering, a Dominican, all suffered the extreme penalty at Tyburn. What happened in London might well have happened to Bishop Mackerell in the north.

S.G.

THE REVELATIONS OF MECHTHILD OF MAGDEBURG. Translated by Lucy Menzies. (Longmans; 18s.)

The title of the collected works of Mechthild which were gathered together in the early fourteenth century and which are here translated almost in their entirety from the original MS., is *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*. This is the theme of her revelations which might almost be given the same title as Mother Julian's since the flowing light is the love of God and this appears in the constant dialogues throughout the book; she writes of 'his touch of love and flow of desire'. These two hundred and sixty detached, though not disconnected, 'revelations' of varying length are of special significance because Mechthild lived throughout the thirteenth century, dying in 1297 just before the great wave of the fourteenth-century mysticism began. They represent a vivid liturgical and poetic mysticism closer in style to the writings of St Gertrude and St Hildegard and leading on to the great poets, in many ways reminding the reader of Dante as Miss Menzies points out. There is much here in the personification of the virtues to suggest the dramatisation of Langland, and the exuberance of Margery Kempe is not lacking. The Mass, the annual procession of saints through the liturgical year, the deep appreciation of the Blessed Sacrament, the horrifying picture of the devil, are all here to show us what the thirteenth century could do for a true mystic. Miss Menzies' occasional notes link these revelations here and there with the Pseudo-Denis and Eckhart; but this would seem to be a strained relationship. Mechthild is not really at home in the 'other-worldly' atmosphere of the neo-platonic spirituality. 'Contemplation' suggests to her that she may be aspiring to be an angel, but she reacts firmly in favour of remaining a human being: 'I take Him in my hand, eat Him and drink Him and do with Him what

I will—that can never happen to the angels however high they may be above me; and His Godhead is never so unattainable to me that I am not ceaselessly aware of Him in all my being'. Mechthild in her poetic manner certainly attains the heights: 'On this my soul was so swiftly in God that it soared up without effort and found itself in the Holy Trinity as a child finds itself under its mother's cloak and lays its head on her breast'. Some of the conversations between the three Persons of the Trinity are scarcely theological, but she is always saved from any active error by having her feet planted in the liturgy and the sacraments. For this reason the book makes an extremely interesting study in liturgical spirituality and Miss Menzies is to be congratulated on making it available and so easily readable to the English public.

JOHN CORSON

**THE HOPE OF GLORY: The Atonement in Our Time.** By Martin Jarrett-Kerr, C.R. (S.C.M. Press; 8s. 6d.)

Catholic theologians of recent years have been concerned mainly with two treatises: on the Church, and on the Eucharist. It is on these two subjects that most of the great books have been written by Mersch, Karl Adam, de Lubac, de la Taille, Masure, Bouyer, and by the Anglicans Thornton and Dix. With regard to the Church, the reason for this is not far to seek: the fact being that up to the present we possessed nothing on the Church comparable, for instance, to the classic treatise on the Redemption. And as for the Eucharist, it must be admitted that we have, since the Reformation, been fighting in theology a rearguard action preoccupied, in the first place, with proving the doctrine of the real presence, and secondly, with emphasising the sacrificial aspect of the Mass in a way sometimes which almost suggested a fresh immolation of Christ on the altar. It was important therefore that theologians should direct their attention to a new and more scholarly approach to these questions.

In doing so however it is important that what may be termed the wider implications of the doctrine of the Redemption do not suffer neglect. Rivière was concerned to maintain the balance by his monumental study *Le Dogme de la Rédemption*, and the author of the present work has also wished to fill a gap of the shelf devoted to shorter (by which we do not mean popular) books on the Atonement. He has particularly borne in mind the objections put forward by modern thinkers of the so-called 'existentialist' school and by the psychologists, maintaining that these two contemporary ways of thought need to be taken as seriously by theologians in this country as they have on the continent 'where a clear Catholic theology meets a scientifically precise knowledge'.

Since his intention is to discuss the Atonement 'apologetically' he starts from a consideration of man's condition as a result of the Fall, and rises