

lips they confess him. . . . Why should there not be a God—so long as he does not bother himself with what men are doing on earth! But the truth is that God watches . . .’ (p. 21): The ultimate rift is a lie about God. The third psalm, Psalm 82 (Vulg. 81, *Deus stetit in synagoga deorum*), is seen as an indictment of those rulers, called ‘gods’ because of their God-given authority, who have abused it by not recognising its origin, and not seeing themselves in the presence of God. In the fourth psalm, Psalm 73 (Vulg. 72, *Quam bonus Israel Deus, his qui recto sunt corde*), the heart of the matter is reached: the heart of Israel. It is not only the well-doing, or the public worship, but it is the heart that counts. And God is good: but the reward is not necessarily prosperity, for the psalm ends with *Mihi autem adhaerere Deo bonum est*. The last meditation is on the first psalm, on the two ways open to mankind, the *via peccatorum* and the *lex Domini*. The latter is followed in God’s presence, while the *iter impiorum*, away, apart from God, *peribit*.

The author himself in the foreword speaks of these meditations as distinguishing between ‘mere conscious being’ (on a purely human plane) and ‘true existence as the nearness of God’, adding that they ‘may therefore be described as an essay in existential exegesis’. This would seem to link them with a new and current mode of thought. Yet Christian writers have for centuries taught that the only true approach to living is to live ‘in the the presence of God’, and the fact that this idea is so strongly represented in the Psalms is surely the reason why the Church has always made the Psalms to be the core of her liturgical piety. The Christian reader may nevertheless be grateful to Professor Buber for having underlined the matter once again.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

HENRY SUSO: THE LITTLE BOOK OF ETERNAL WISDOM AND THE LITTLE BOOK OF TRUTH. Translated with Introduction and Notes by James M. Clark. (Faber; 18s.)

Blessed Henry Suso is certainly one of the most human and lovable among the great mystics. Professor Clark has done him a real service among English-speaking people. There has been no translation of his life or *The Little Book of Eternal Wisdom* for the best part of a century. A few years ago the French Dominicans brought out a critical edition of Suso’s Life and writings in their entirety. An English counterpart has been long overdue; now that a portion of it has come, it has been well worth waiting for. Professor Clark has given us a masterly introduction and this is followed by a most delightful annotated translation of *The Little Book of Eternal Wisdom* and *The Little Book of Truth*. One has always been accustomed to think of Suso the poet and mystic, losing sight, to a great extent, of Suso the theologian, the trained thomist. Yet he himself says that when he had prepared for his degree, he did not take it solely in

obedience to divine command. Professor Clark has remedied this, and the two books chosen for translation show very clearly Suso the MINNESINGER and the theologian. One is introduced to the saint from a new angle. To quote from the preface (p. 12): 'From his works we can build up a complete picture of the man. We see his humility, his modesty, his deep insight into the springs of human conduct, not only in its frailty, but also in its strength, his tenderness and sympathy for all who suffer, his charity, his sincerity and his spirituality.' And again (p. 18): 'But *The Little Book of Truth* is not the product of an immature mind. As regards chronology it may be early, but it is not youthful. The writer has been trained in theology and philosophy, and he has made some progress on the mystic way. He is writing of things that he knows, not merely theoretically, but also through actual experience.'

One of the most delightful characteristics of this book is the care and scholarship which has been lavished; from beginning to end one is conscious that no pains have been spared in perfecting it. A passage like this from the introduction (page 23) is a joy to read: 'To speculate is to look in a mirror. To look at the universe is to speculate on the nature of God, and to see the Creator in his works. Suso paints in glowing colours the beauty of the heavens, with the starry host, the glory of the summer, the grass and foliage and flowers, the song of the birds, and so forth. If God is so lovable in his creatures, how much more lovable must he be in himself.' One appreciates the care which has been taken in the translation and annotation, even to transliterating and pointing out the rhyming passages which occur in *The Little Book of Eternal Wisdom*. To sum up: Professor Clark has given us a book which is not only a literary treat, but should be of real help in the spiritual life. S.M.C.

MARGARET OF METOLA. By William R. Bonniwell, O.P., with drawings by Sr Mary of the Compassion, O.P. (P. J. Kenedy and Sons, New York; \$2.50.)

Here is a happy example of Dominican family co-operation: the life of a Secular Tertiary written by an historian of the Order and illustrated by a Nun of the Perpetual Rosary who is one of America's leading Catholic artists. In the course of his researches Fr Bonniwell chanced upon the original MS. of the life of Margaret of Metola, b. 1287, the Margaret of Castello of the Dominican Breviary. Finding that it differed substantially from the traditional version, he produced a critical study upon which this popular account is based.

It was known that Margaret was born blind; now it emerges that she was also hunchbacked, crippled and generally deformed. Her callous parents, noble only in name, unwilling to acknowledge such an offspring, kept her out of sight, hiding her in an anchoress's cell when she was six, then in a cellar of their palace where she was deprived even of the