

[1958. Review of *Late Medieval Mysticism*, Ray C. Petry, ed. *Christianity Today* 12 May.]

ANTHOLOGY OF MYSTICS

Late Medieval Mysticism, edited by Ray C. Petry, Westminster Press, 1957. 424 pp. \$5.00.

This thirteenth volume of the library of Christian classics consists of selections, one newly translated, from Bernard, the Victorines, Francis, Bonaventura, Lull, Eckhart, Rolle, Suso, Catherine of Siena, van Ruysbroeck, Theologia Germanica, Nicolas of Cusa, and Catherine of Genoa.

The editor notes that asceticism is the normal source and accompaniment of mysticism. Thus most of the mystics were monks.

In spite of this unhealthy and unscriptural mode of life, mystics sometimes write intelligibly and their thoughts are profitable, e.g. Bernard *On the Love of God* (p. 54). The selection from Ramon Lull is not so much mystical as it is a fanciful though serious plea for the study of foreign languages in preparation for missionary work.

Francis, on the other hand, shows his Mariolatry; and the Victorines are intolerably allegorical. So is Eckhart, who wrote, "Why did Christ say, Martha, Martha, naming her twice? Isidor says there is no doubt that prior to the time when God was man he never called anyone by name lest any should be lost whom he did not name and about whom it was doubtful. Christ's calling I take it, means his eternal knowing. . . . Why did he name Martha twice? He meant that every good thing, temporal and eternal, destined for creature, was Martha's. The first 'Martha' stood for perfection in temporal works; the second one for her eternal weal" (pp. 194-195).

The selections are good examples of the travesty of Christianity effected by monasticism, mysticism, and Romanism. The volume has carefully prepared indexes.

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