

regarding authors like Ruysbroeck and the English mystics. Perhaps the thorniest problem set by his subject is the thoroughgoing asceticism of the great majority of mystics and their frequently disparaging views on the nothingness of creatures. Dr Dalby deals with this in an eminently sane and satisfactory manner. Though his distinction between 'moral asceticism, the asceticism of the Kingdom and mystical asceticism' (p. 107) seems somewhat arbitrary, he fully recognises the essence of 'all Christian asceticism: it is closely linked with devotion to the suffering humanity of our Lord', and that it is this feature 'that makes it wholly different from that Eastern asceticism, which. . . . seems so often fundamentally self-centred.' (p. 113). His chapters on 'Symbolism and Nature Mysticism' and on 'The Dark Night and Quietism' seem particularly valuable. We think, however, that in certain parts of the book, especially in the chapters on 'Mysticism, Grace and Nature', 'The Necessity of the Supernatural' and 'The Goodness of the Natural', far more use ought to have been made of the teaching of St Thomas, who is barely mentioned. In him, Dr Dalby would have found the theological foundations which would have permitted him to raise his edifice on a far broader and sounder basis. Would it be too much to hope that in future editions of this so valuable little book such unacceptable distinctions as between 'Roman' and 'Catholic' (implied e.g. p. 14) might be omitted, together with phrases like 'just another example of the intolerance of the Vatican' (p. 135)? It seems to us that such remarks are unworthy of an otherwise fair and balanced work.

H. C. GRAEF.

A TALKYNG OF YE LOUE OF GOD. Edited by C. M. Westra. (Martinus Nijhoff; Gravenage; n.p.)

This fourteenth-century gem is a compilation, with additions and omissions of two earlier works *On Ureisen* and *Ye Wohunge*, the second of which has been published in the E.E.T.S., Vol. 34. The treatise is edited from the Vernon MS, a fact which, as the editor indicates, reveals the nature and the purpose of the compilation. For the true title of the Vernon MS is *Salus Animae* or 'Sowlehele' and it comprises a great number of treatises some of which are intended to lead to affective prayer. *A Talkyng* appears towards the end of the MS and presupposes the spiritual development intended to be fostered by the preceding works, and is specifically designed by the art of the compiler to lead from reading and discursive meditation to actual, affective prayers towards the end. The editor, who is a Dutch Dominican nun, has performed her task with considerable skill and scholarship, with a technical introduction, the text itself with a modern version beside it; and with specific notes on the text, on its phonology and on its grammar in the second half of the volume. Apart from the Dutch

title page the whole book might appear as a work of English scholarship such as is to be found in the Early English Text Society's productions.

But the text itself is worthy of study from a personal point of view. Not only does it reveal the sources of such devotion as the *Jesus Psalter* and the same high inspirations as Hilton and his spiritual contemporaries; but it will also serve its original purpose of assisting the reader to a simple prayer centred on the Person of our Lord. And it is here that we would raise the only adverse criticism. The modernised version has been, it appears, based on the misconception that the fourteenth-century idiom is entirely foreign to the modern English reader. On this assumption much of the strength of the original which is so much more concrete and direct is lost in the modern verbose and rather remote style. Thus 'A Talkyng of ye loue of God' is turned into 'A Discourse on the Love of God'; 'thou' etc. becomes always 'You' (with a capital 'Y'); 'stilleth his tears' becomes 'stops his tears'; 'A derworthe lord muchel is thi myldeschupc, that spraddest so thin Armes, bodiliche on Rood' is turned into 'Ah dear Lord, great is Your clemency who thus spread Your arms bodily on the cross', 'Milde Marie' is 'gracious May'. These are random examples which may reveal the style of the modernised version in relation to its original. But this is perhaps a question of taste and as the text is there in its original beauty to compare at every stage criticism is disarmed. The learned Sister has indeed re-produced a masterpiece in spiritual literature.

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE MASS. By William Barden, O.P. (Clonmore & Reynolds; 4s. 6d.)

There have been far too few attempts to link up the liturgical and the 'mystical' elements of the Mass, in order to help the faithful to make the Holy Sacrifice an essential part of their life of prayer. Usually when the attempt is made a separation rather than a unification of these two aspects is achieved. Father Barden has set out to perform this work of synthesis and has indeed covered a great deal of the essential aspects of the spiritual life and revealed their connection with the Mass. He has succeeded where many before him have failed. The only complaint that readers may raise will be that the author includes so much in so short a space; action and contemplation, the theological virtues, the Fatherhood of God, the Trinity—the reader is led breathlessly to the heights in a very short space. It is tantalising, too, to touch on a very profound analysis of the offertory, unrealised by most authors, and then to move on before it has been elucidated. There are, in fact, points which demand further development for, as they stand, they suggest the usual separation, in contradiction to the author's intention of making a synthesis: thus the apparent restriction of faith to personal experience and the sacraments to the liturgical life