

Vannier, Marie-Anne (direction), *La naissance de Dieu dans l'âme chez Eckhart et Nicolas de Cues* (Patrimoine christianisme), Paris CERF, 2006, 188 pages, ISBN 2-2-4-07985-5

One of the main problems in recent Eckhart-research is the authenticity of German sermons 101-106 (published by Quint in 1963). Until now it was impossible to assure these sermons were ever held by the great medieval thinker. In a book now published by Marie-Anne Vannier, the German scholar Georg Steer shows that he is able to proof that at least sermons 101-104 are really written by Eckhart himself. Steer argues that these four sermons are characterised by a unity of theme and style. They were collected very early. As soon as can be shown that at least one of these sermons is authentic, it is a clear sign that the others are from the hand of Eckhart as well. Steer is able to show that the changes made in Sermo 105 are made by an anonymous author and not by Eckhart. This observation is the starting point of a line of argumentation which leads to the authentication of sermo 105, which means that all sermons 101-104 are genuine eckhartian sermons. Contrary to all other sermons, these are the only ones, Eckhart made the redaction of these four himself. The central theme of these sermons is the birth of God in the human soul. And the contributions in the book, published by Marie-Anne Vannier attempt to show that the theme of the 'birth of God in the soul' is (therefore) one of the central themes in Eckhartian thinking. As almost all authors, important scholars as Bernhard McGinn, Georg Steer or Harald Schwaetzer, argue, the idea of divine birth is a still more important theme than that of 'detachment', a theme which is stressed by more orthodox interpretations. This general interpretation of Eckhartian thinking is reinforced by the comparison with Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464), one of the most important Eckhart-readers in late middle ages. It is often said, that there are many lines between the work of Eckhart and that of Cusa. Departing from the idea of divine birth, this intuition becomes ensured knowledge. The idea of divine birth becomes embedded in a larger mystical-speculative tradition as the contributions of McGinn and Schwaetzer both show in a fascinating manner. The fact that all contributions can be read as a comment on a small group of texts gives a large degree of coherence on the book. At the same time the book delivers a broad scale of insights on the thinking of Eckhart and can be seen as the starting point of a new research program on the theme of divine birth in western thinking.

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