

notion of *ἰποκείμενον* is not the same as that of *materia prima*, as seems to be implied on p. 6.

In the course of his discussion of causality, Prof. Luce refers to the gradual 'loosening' of the concept of cause which is taking place in philosophy and science, and which he attributes to the belated working of the 'leaven of Hume.' However this may be, the abandonment of the 'universal causal nexus' of determinism is also due in large part to the breakdown of all purely mechanical explanations of the processes of nature. It is the realisation of this last fact which has led scientists like Jeans and Eddington to admit the possibility of causes and sources of action which are spiritual and independent of space-time. In his book *Physics and Philosophy* Jeans even considers that the time is ripe for reopening the case for free-will, and expresses a request that someone should do so. Mr. Heydon's little book was written as a direct answer to this request, and we can only say that we hope it will get into the hands of Sir James. He will find in it the rational argument for free-will for which he asks, as well a discussion of the true relation between physics and philosophy by one who is evidently conversant both with the latest developments of modern physics and the principles and methods of the *philosophia perennis*. We must admit, however, that the book is not easy to read, owing to the author's somewhat involved style, and the lack of either index or references will not help to recommend it to the scientific reader.

E.C.

LENT : A LITURGICAL COMMENTARY ON THE LESSONS AND GOSPELS. By Conrad Pepler, O.P. (Herder; \$4.00.)

Six years ago, Fr. Pepler, in his introduction to the admirably printed edition of the Lenten Lessons and Gospels published by Hague and Gill, gave promise of an extended commentary to follow. This has now appeared in America as an impressive volume of over 400 pages, worthy to take its place beside the work of Guéranger and Pius Parsch. For the present it is not readily available in this country, though individual copies may be ordered through Herder's London house at 33 Queen Square, W.C.

The Lenten liturgy is much more than a haphazard collection of scriptural readings, even though a logical scheme is not easy to trace. Fr. Pepler's method is a generous one: he gives to each day's lesson and gospel the consideration they deserve for their own sake, but links them up with the main rhythm of Lent, 'the Church's annual retreat'; the identification of the Church with Christ in his Passion which must precede her share in the triumph of his Resurrection. The Church's public use of these readings, while part of an objective act of worship, is yet closely related to the needs of the faithful—whether of catechumens preparing for baptism, or of sinners seeking absolution, or of all alike learning the way of penance and purification.

Thus Lent provides a progressive course of doctrinal instruction, and not the least of the merits of Fr. Pepler's book is its insistence on this showing-forth of the truths of faith in the liturgical setting. Too often liturgical writers are absorbed in the symbol itself and not in what is symbolised—nothing less than the whole variegated life of the Mystical Body. The notion that there are, as it were, two realities—the liturgical 'as against' the dogmatic—is wholly destroyed in this rich commentary on the total life of the Church as revealed in the days of Lent. The homilies of the Fathers, the consideration of the ceremonial context, the infused understanding of mystics, practical conclusions for the life of prayer—all these have a natural place in an approach that rises above the textual and historical level: not indeed so as to ignore the concrete fact of the action done, the words uttered, but so as to absorb them in the Church itself, in which nothing that is of God can be alien.

A future edition might well print citations from the readings in italics, so as to bring out more forcibly the counterpoint of text and commentary. An indication of the stational church each day would be useful, as would a more detailed list of contents. A bibliography might assist those who wish to turn to the sources on which the author draws with such discernment.

It is greatly to be hoped that Fr. Pepler may now turn to the rest of the liturgical year, using the same methods which are indeed the indispensable ones for understanding the Church's public worship as the expression of its work as the teacher of all Truth. In the meantime, this commentary on the Lenten readings must be welcomed as a notable contribution to liturgical literature. When one thinks of the paucity of books of this sort in English, it is a matter for thankfulness that in America, at least, paper is being put to good use by Catholic publishers.

D.A.E.

FIRE-WEED. A Novel by Naomi Royde Smith. (Macmillan; 10s. 6d.)

The fire-weed grows in the ruins of burned-out houses: its red spikes were the first of this war's memorials. There could be no apter title for Miss Royde Smith's new novel of sixty years in the life of an English county family. The book ends with a blitz in London, at the moment when it seems that the personal failures of Rufus Greyne, the painter of genius who is the novel's central character, are to be resolved at last. Death comes to Lise, the dancer to whom he is reunited after twenty years of unfulfilment. That is the answer: that and the flower that grows out of destruction.

This is a novel on a generous scale: the life at Michaelsford, where the Greyne's have lived since the days of Elizabeth, with the ample parties for jubilees and comings-of-age; life at Beauminster, the ancient public school to which the sons go in their turn; life in Paris studios and London galleries; Greece in 1939 and Bristol and Lon-