

language growing naturally too healthy and arduous for our battered ears: perhaps the gulf is unbridgeable according to the flesh: perhaps there will have to be a reversion to simpler ways, a revolution after Fr McNabb's heart and Chesterton's, before large-scale communication becomes linguistically feasible, with only uncovenanted revelations and mercies meanwhile for those trapped and *incommunicado* inside the grey technolatries.

CHRISTOPHER DERRICK

ORIGEN AND THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD, by Peter Nemeshegyi; Desclée.

Looking for the central intuition guiding Origen's theology, Fr Nemeshegyi thinks that he has found it in the concept of the divine fatherhood. A deep and extensive knowledge of Origen, as well as of his historians and commentators, allows him to develop and to illustrate this thesis with enthusiasm and conviction. We are, without any doubt, convinced of the importance that the divine fatherhood plays in the thought of Origen, above all by the role that the idea of the fatherhood of the author of all things plays in middle Platonism, where it is the expression of the metaphysical implications of the essential good and of the ways in which the first being is participated. Elsewhere Fr Nemeshegyi has no difficulty in showing that in making use of this philosophical doctrine, Origen corrects it and raises it as a result of what his Christian faith and the gospel teach him about the fatherhood of God. This said, one must make a few reservations about the role of 'key' that this concept is deemed to play in all understanding of the thought of Origen. The many pages in which Fr Nemeshegyi expounds, always with competence and ability, the various aspects of this thinking, never allow the idea of divine fatherhood to be lost, yet the connection between these repeated assertions and the work in which they are set is not always evident. Thus, in the doctrine of the *apocatastasis*, the divine fatherhood is brought in to explain the basis of the teaching; it is much less certain that it constitutes the premiss from which the body of the doctrine issues.

It would be unkind, however, to be too critical of Fr Nemeshegyi. He appears himself to concede in the preface that there is not, in an absolutely rigorous sense, any idea that can be the one and only 'key' to the system and be in his words 'the central idea around which all the rest of the doctrinal structure could arrange itself'. For the endeavour to be legitimate and fruitful, it is enough that the idea chosen as the centre of the study should be sufficiently essential to the system to bring under consideration major articulations of Origen's theology and the understanding of them. It seems to us beyond dispute that Fr Nemeshegyi has succeeded in this enterprise.

Ready to recognise that his chapter on the second person of the Trinity is well balanced and, on certain points, of very great interest, we wonder if the author has not minimised too much the subordinationism of Origen. It is

beyond dispute that the great theologian was less subordinationist in his convictions than in his writings. There is proof of this in his unceasing efforts to escape the consequences of affirmations too beholden to the current philosophy. But I doubt if one has the right to say that this effort has been crowned with success, despite an impressive attempt at a total union in and through the unique will (a thesis taken up again with regard to the hypostatic union). On the contrary, it would be wrong to make Origen into an Arian; Fr Nemeshegyi has indeed shown how the primacy of faith was absolute with him and unceasingly guided his search for a synthesis, perhaps the most adventurous search that the history of theology has ever known. It is not an insult to Origen to say that the general result was not a total success; some whole chapters are masterpieces that have nourished Christian thought for all time.

HENRI DE RIEDMATTEN, O.P.

FROM FIRST ADAM TO LAST, by C. K. Barrett; Adam & Charles Black, 15s.

'Paul sees history gathering at nodal points, and crystallizing upon outstanding figures . . . These men, as it were, incorporate the human race, or sections of it, within themselves, and the dealings they have with God they have representatively on behalf of their fellows'. Each of these names, Adam, Abraham, Moses, is descriptive in varying proportions and degrees of every man. And since the plane of anthropology in scripture is crossed by the coming of Christ in humiliation and his coming again in glory, these three Old Testament personalities are Christologically as well as anthropologically significant. Prof. Barrett sets out to study St Paul's teaching on these two planes.

Adam, by an act which was the antithesis of our Saviour's self-denying obedience, subjected mankind, and with it the whole of creation, to evil powers bringing sin, condemnation and death. Abraham, who humbly put his trust in God's power to raise to life and fruitfulness the dead womb of Sarah, prefigured Christian believers in the God who raised Christ from the dead. To Abraham was therefore given the divine promise of salvation for all peoples through his progeny. Moses' rôle as antitype of Christ delivering his people from bondage is not a theme stressed in Paul's letters. Far more important is the law of God which he mediates. The law provided a channel for obedience and faith, and laid down the divine commandment of love which was later confirmed by the Gospel. But love is easily perverted into desire for self-justification. Sin, finding opportunity in the law by means of this perversion into legalism, used it as its point of entry into human life; and so the law had to await its vindication in Christ.

In four chapters of careful study of Paul's use of the three Old Testament characters and their relation to Christ, Prof. Barrett never departs far from his sources. In a final chapter, however, 'The Man to Come', he allows himself theological generalizations which are unacceptable to Catholics, although even