

THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

ORIGENE: HOMELIES SUR L'EXOUE. (Collection 'Sources Chrétiennes'). Traduction de P. Fortier, S.J., introduction de H. de Lubac, S.J. (Editions du Cerf: Blackfriars Publications; 13s. 0d.)

HILAIRE DE POITIERS: TRAITE DES MYSTERES. (Collection 'Sources Chrétiennes'). Texte Latin, introduction de P. Brisson. (Editions du Cerf: Blackfriars Publications; 10s. 0d.)

ST AUGUSTINE: LIKE AS THE HART. (Blackfriars Publications; 1s. 6d.)

Père de Lubac's long introduction to this volume of Origen is so extremely good and remarkable that it has the effect of weakening the appeal of the translation following. There are excellent things in these homilies on Exodus, but they mingle with much that is comparatively uninteresting. Père de Lubac, on the other hand, gives us Origen's intellectuality and spirituality in a distilled form that holds our interest and admiration over 75 pages; he thoroughly penetrates his author and quotes him at his best. Here is one passage, on Origen's exposition of the Transfiguration: 'Moïse et Elie, qui sont la Loi et les Prophètes, c'est-à-dire tout l'Ancien Testament, n'ont par eux-mêmes aucune gloire, et comme ils sont distincts entre eux, ils le sont aussi de Jésus, c'est-à-dire de l'Évangile. Mais voici que sur la montagne ils apparaissent aux Apôtres nimbés de la gloire qui rayonne de Jésus. Davantage, ils sont enfin comme absorbés en lui: "Une foi que le Logos les eut touchés, un seul sont devenus Moïse, la Loi, et Elie, la Prophétie: un seul avec Jésus, qui est l'Évangile. Et ce n'est plus comme avant: ils ne restent plus trois, mais les trois sont devenus un seul Être".'

The edition of St Hilary of Poitiers is also an excellent piece of work. St Hilary's writings are in any case neglected, and the *Tractatus Mysteriorum* came to light only sixty years ago. It provided a series—now incomplete—of certain central events and personages of the Old Testament, shown as prefiguring christian realities—the *gesta* looking forward to the *gerenda*. St Hilary's own work is of interest and importance (Eastern and Western currents of christian thought met in it); and the editor has enriched the book with ample cross-references to other patristic sources and with a careful and lucid discussion of the technical terms—*species*, *figuratio*, *exemplum*, etc.—used to express the ideas of type and antitype. St Hilary's Latin is often difficult, and the translation is to be commended for its generally high standard of clarity and accuracy. I venture on one or two criticisms. On p. 76 St Hilary's use of *flammeus* need not imply that he misunderstood the Greek; the Latin adjective is sometimes used of mere colour. On p. 112 the MS. reading *lenis* should be restored (the Vulgate has it in the passage referred to), and the meaning must be: 'Since Jacob is smooth of skin, he must counterfeit (says Rebecca) the hands and neck of Esau'. On p. 134 *relecta* should be removed from where it stands, and perhaps *lecta* or *collecta* should be inserted

in the relative clause in the line above. On p. 138, *caelestis* should presumably be *caelesti*.

Both of these volumes may be recommended as making a serious contribution not only to the history of Scriptural exegesis but to the spiritual understanding of Scripture itself. St Hilary, it may be added, has one very interesting Petrine reference (p. 96 of this edition).

In *Like as the Hart* we have in printed form for the first time a 16th-century English translation of St Augustine's *Enarratio super Psalmum XLI*. The MS. in question is preserved at Quarr Abbey and has been carefully edited by Dom G. D. Schlegel. The Latin original is notable among St Augustine's sermons; Abbot Butler indeed held it to contain 'the most considerable and complete of Augustine's descriptions of the process and nature of the mystic experience'. The translator is not at the level of the original, which he follows section by section (with some freedom and amplification) without giving the impression that he has a confident grasp of the whole. But this version was certainly worth rescuing from obscurity, and its writer sometimes seems to look back to a medieval freshness and homeliness. 'I am not as yet there where the sweet delight is, with the which I was ravished for some little time, having had but a very snatch of it'. 'Oh, what a profound depth of infirmity and weakness lay there hid in Peter which he knew not of, when he knew not what there was all to do within, in his own heart; for he promised rashly to die with our Lord, or rather to die for him, when alas, alas, when he came to the pinch he denied him utterly again and again'.

WALTER SHEWRING

ATHANASE D'ALEXANDRIE: *Lettres a Sérapion*. (Collection 'Sources Chrétiennes'). Introduction et traduction de M. le Chanoine Lebon. (Editions du Cerf: Blackfriars Publications; 12s. 6d.)

One of the minor puzzles of the history of dogma is the slow development of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Even so late as St Basil, the Greek Fathers were reluctant to say right out 'The Holy Spirit is God', although they believed and wrote treatises to prove it. St Athanasius's four letters to Serapion, the famous but little-known compiler of the Euchology or Prayer Book that bears his name, is such a treatise. Informal, bearing the marks of hasty composition and at first giving an impression of St Athanasius's obsession with the Arian controversy, then at its height, these letters are a valuable introduction to his thought and method. A careful reading soon shows that they are a not unimportant contribution to theology. Canon Lebon in his introduction which deals more than adequately with the historical circumstances, chronology and authenticity of the letters, underlines their theological importance and gives us two or three