

This overshadowing undoubtedly resulted in a kind of myth of a father who, if not exactly unorthodox, yet engaged in rather unprofitable and somewhat recondite speculations.

The two works contained in the present volume should serve both to dispel this undeserved reputation and to introduce its readers to St Gregory's thought. As an administrator he may not have been a great success, but at least these homilies show that he was far from failing in the more important episcopal function of teaching. It is indeed a very attractive figure which emerges in these sermons, that of a bishop fully aware both of the everyday life which his flock lived with all its temptations against true Christian living, and of the best thought outside the Church at the time. The easy way in which these two awarenesses are here blended together, the common touch acting as a foil to argument which is always exacting, betrays a skill at least as much pastoral as literary.

It is this pastoral note which is responsible for the moral and exhortatory tone as well as the preoccupation with the literal sense which are more in evidence here than in most of Gregory's writings. But again it is precisely this fact which makes these homilies such a good introduction to him, since his great theme of the restored image of God in man is here related to the most common level of Christian life.

Altogether this is a very welcome addition to patristic literature now available in English. The translation combines the virtues of accuracy, an easy flowing English, and a flavour of the original; and it is preceded and accompanied by an excellent introduction and notes. If there be one small point at which one may cavil, it is that the translator seems to have nodded in what is practically the last note. The text in question, with its ascription of crucifixion as the mode of his martyrdom to St Paul, is undoubtedly not in accordance with the tradition. But unless an important element has been omitted in the note as it stands, it is difficult to see how matters are really to be improved in this respect by substituting first Peter for Paul, and then Andrew for Peter where the text goes on to speak of crucifixion head-downwards.

RONALD TORBET, O.P.

ALEXANDRIAN CHRISTIANITY. Edited and translated by J. E. L. Oulton, D.D., and by H. Chadwick, B.D. (Library of Christian Classics. S.C.M. Press; 30s.)

This volume consists of selected translations from the writings of Clement of Alexandria and of Origen, with brief introductions and some notes. It is easy to criticize the selection made. Clement is only represented by two sections of the *Stromateis*; and one of these is the conventional and oddly uninspired section upon marriage. Origen is rather more fortunate, since the Dialogue with Heraclides is included,

as well as the treatise on prayer and the exhortation to martyrdom. Yet even here there is little to suggest his range as an apologist or his power as an exegete. But though the depth of thought and insight of the great Alexandrians are conveyed so inadequately it must be remembered that the editors were limited to a few extracts by the scope of the series and that their simple introductions and notes were not intended for specialists.

G.M.

CHRISTIANITY IS REVOLUTIONARY. By Maurice Fraigneux. (Cassell; 12s. 6d.)

Maurice Fraigneux is a young Belgian writer, born in 1922, who has already half-a-dozen books to his name. He writes on philosophical and sociological subjects.

From a young man writing a book with such a provocative title one would expect a rather violent book. In fact *Christianity is Revolutionary* is a calm analysis of the fundamental principles of Christianity. M. de Reynold in his stimulating preface points out that Fraigneux is not using the word 'revolutionary' in its modern marxian sense but in its original literal sense of a return to a starting point. A Christian revolution must always mean a return to the basic principles which are given to mankind in divine revelation. Revolutions in the modern destructive sense are the result of a disregard of these basic principles. The contemporary stage of revolution is in fact a complete collapse resulting from an utter rejection of these principles by modern society. There needs to be a *renovatio*, a true revolution, if society is to be saved; a regaining of a sense of holiness which means a sense of the presence of a personal living God, the God of believers.

It is in the history of the Jewish people that we are shown the growth and the development of the idea of the Presence of God as a living historical reality, which shaped and gave meaning to it, and made the Jewish people unique among all the peoples of the world. This history culminated in the coming of Christ who fulfilled and enlarged all the religious ideals of the Jewish people.

Fraigneux has of course no deep scriptural learning but he does give us a very able and clear exposition of a fundamental theme in the Scriptures. He has a great gift for putting profound truths into simple language. In the second part of his book he outlines the way in which the Church has inherited the truths of divine revelation and how these truths have been rediscovered and reapplied by the great religious leaders. This is a most stimulating book, which can safely be put into the hands of any intelligent reader who wishes to get a grasp of the deep influence of divine revelation on the course of human history.

SIMON BLAKE, O.P.