

to be learned in this age of appalling injustice, especially under the communist menace. The great merit of the book is the author's capacity to state in the simplest way and the briefest compass the basic principles on which all clear thought about justice must rest. All those who try to follow St Thomas's teaching without any previous philosophical training will find in this book not only an admirable guide to the understanding of the text, together with a wealth of most helpful references, but no less a model of how to approach the text so as to be fully repaid for their efforts.

WILFRID ARDAGH, O.P.

GEORGE BERKELEY AND THE PROOFS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD. By Edward Sillem. (Longmans; 21s.)

Philosophy would be a more attractive subject if all who practised it wrote as well as George Berkeley or his latest commentator. Fr Sillem gives a clear account of Berkeley's philosophy in relation to its central problem of natural theology; eventually exposition gives place to criticism, and to an interesting comparison with the work of modern theists, such as Farrer, Trethowan, Wisdom and Hawkins.

The first six chapters develop Berkeley's theory of the immediate perception of material things, against Locke's and the usual opinion that there is more to them than meets the eye. He insisted that the only way to avoid scepticism was to hold that ideas *are* particular things, not representative of them, and that this after all was only commonsense (one cannot read much Berkeley without appreciating the exasperation he caused his more fumbling opponents). By contrast a spirit comes to be known through the mediation of things; as we recognize our own souls in perceiving, willing, acting, and the souls of other people similarly, so too we know God through what he creates. For each thing conforms to an ordered pattern: all cherries, for example, are alike. Now this is not due to our perceiving them, nor to things themselves, since the Lockean legend of unknown substances has been refuted; it must therefore be due to a spirit other than ourselves.

This is a brief summary of a detailed account amply supported by quotation. In the last chapter Fr Sillem speaks in his own person. He convincingly defends Berkeley against the charge of idealism, pointing to the strong contrast always made between material and spiritual. To be material precisely is *percipi* and not *percipere*. Fr Sillem then defends the proof itself. It is open to all men, not only to those capable of subtle reasoning; and it leads them to know God as a person, not as an abstract notion. The Kantian objection that any such proof must involve illegitimate *a priori* reasoning can hardly apply, since Berkeley

does not abandon that experience of perception which is the foundation of his proof. Next it is argued that Berkeley was right not to deny religious belief before starting on a philosophical proof. Here I would want to say that while such proof can only explicate what is in some way already known, the world being God's first revelation to all men, yet surely, before we argue towards him, we need to set aside false assumptions as to what God is, and even the assumption that anything at all can ever tell us what he is. This in effect is the fundamental and unanswerable criticism finally brought against the proof by Fr Sillem himself. Berkeley thought that we can know God as we know any other spirit; he thought of him as the first cause in a class of causes. In other words he failed to appreciate that the name of God can never be given to a being who does not totally transcend all experience. Such philosophical naivety must in the end exclude Berkeley's proof from serious consideration. But for all that every theist can learn from him, and should be grateful to Fr Sillem for a fine piece of work.

LAURENCE BRIGHT, O.P.

THE PSEUDO-CYPRIANIC DE PASCHA COMPUTUS. Translated by George Ogg. (S.P.C.K.; 6s. 6d.)

CYRIL OF JERUSALEM AND NEMESIUS OF EMESA. Edited by William Telfer. (Library of Christian Classics, Vol. IV. S.C.M. Press; 30s.)

Your ignorance of how St Cyprian did not calculate—and with some inaccuracy—the date of Easter, is a gap in your Christian knowledge which is here being filled in for you almost before you are aware of it. Even when you have read this short treatise, it is more than possible that you will still not understand how this enthusiastic amateur astronomer reached his conclusions, unless you are such an astronomer yourself. But at any rate you will have picked up much interesting, and not always merely chuckle-worthy, biblical exegesis; for example that the Temple of Solomon was generally agreed to be made in the veiled likeness of Adam. And you may perhaps be helped to appreciate the symbolic importance of celebrating Easter on a movable date, whose astronomical premises link the feast up with the creation of sun and moon, and thus give a fitting cosmic value to the memorial of universal redemption and cosmic re-creation.

The catechumens whom Cyril was preparing for their Easter baptism at Jerusalem were concerned with less recondite matters. The catecheses here translated are in fact instructions on the creed, with some introductory talks on sincerity of conversion, repentance, and baptism. This dogmatic and moral instruction before baptism would be followed by instruction on the sacraments in the 'mystagogic' sermons after Easter. It is perhaps a pity that the mystagogic sermons