

5, 1) who was to be a 'man of sorrows acquainted with infirmity' (Isaiah 53, 3) and even that 'they pierced my hands and feet, they have numbered all my bones' (Ps. 21, 18). Our Lord fulfilled prophecies by his coming as by his passion; the utterances of the men of God converge on him who died on Calvary.

Through the prophets, too, 'Israel became the manifest portion of God' (Eccles. 17, 2). Thus there (*tetelestai*) has a fullness of meaning, which no one word can adequately represent. It is perfected, is fulfilled, is completed—there is something of all this and even more. Perfection, achievement, fulfilment, rounding off; *something perfect wrought by God*: small wonder that we cannot grasp.

It was first, the fulfilment of all his life's purpose, from early childhood—'Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?' (Lk. 2, 49)—as later in life when 'he set his face to go to Jerusalem' (Lk. 9, 51), knowing well what was to come, and then again in the agony of Gethsemane: 'not my will but thine be done' (Lk. 22, 42).

Then, stepping back to gaze upon the plan of all God's purposes, we can see that this 'achievement' means Redemption accomplished or God's infinite designs realised. A first phase of those designs, as revealed to us, is a story of creation, that creation which is the true background of the re-creation or Redemption. Thus the opening words of St John's gospel are to be read against the background of Genesis, and St Paul tells us that God 'who commanded the light to shine out of darkness has shone in our hearts' (2 Cor. 4, 6). This re-creating was a long story of shepherding and forming the people of God; a chosen people, because the very vicissitudes of their history were all so much type and figure of an infinitely greater reality culminating in a Redemption wrought once for all. The sacrifices and worship of this people were but a passing order, fragmentary, only effective for a time, shadows of a reality to be, a perfect and unique sacrifice.

That Sacrifice was a fulfilment, the culmination of sufferings voluntarily borne, and so meaningful for Christian generations. These sufferings and the supreme Sacrifice serve to show the summit of God's love—the greatest fulfilment or achievement of all; to show that 'we have been brought at a great price' (1 Cor. 6, 20). The 'fullness of the time' is above all a fullness in this showing forth of God's love.

ROLAND POTTER, O.P.

THE ORIGINALITY OF ST MATTHEW. By B. C. Butler. (Cambridge University Press; 18s.)

The *originality* of St Matthew might suggest quite other trains of thought than those envisaged by Abbot Butler in this work. Age-old usage has always put St Matthew first among the gospels, first of all the books of the New Testament. Christian tradition has long tended

to give it pride of place. It was the favourite gospel of St Dominic; he carried a text of St Matthew on his travels. To this day, in our Sunday gospels, St Matthew is frequently cited, St Mark only rarely. St Matthew, on many scores, is the *initial* gospel. He opens with a genealogy of the Saviour, and this gives tone and colour to all the rest of the work. The great themes and prophecies of the Old Testament appear on every page and are linked to the final reality of the Messias come on earth in the Person of Jesus Christ. Readers of LIFE OF THE SPIRIT may well see all this and be interested in the newer trends of theological exegesis, preferring to see the gospel as a literary and spiritual unity with plan and purpose, now and again tending to reveal an underlying evangelist rather than a material compiler; and they would be open to accept St Augustine's dictum and call St Mark 'Matthaei pedisequum et breviatorem'.

But for Abbot Butler the originality of St Matthew means a strenuous critical vindication of the priority of St Matthew in the complex *concordia discordans* that constitutes the Synoptic problem. He unhesitatingly challenges the Two-Document hypothesis (so often uncritically taught or assumed) which makes St Matthew and St Luke depend on St Mark and another source, usually termed 'Q', and he 'writes with feeling having been myself at one time an adherent of the school' (p. 70, note). He has seen clearly 'that (a) the dogma of Marcan priority drives scholars to the acceptance of the Q hypothesis and (b) the acceptance of the Q hypothesis anchors them more firmly in the dogma of Marcan priority', and a great deal of his work has gone to the breaking up of this vicious ring. The result is a small, compact book, densely written with business-like terseness.

This is no place for the testing of the arguments in detail. Suffice it to say that, given an open mind on the Synoptic problem, the arguments by accumulation are quietly compelling. But for the vast majority of critics, and the many uncritical, born and bred in the Two-Document hypothesis (hardened into dogma) conviction may come all too slowly or not at all. Abbot Butler's work is definitely on the side of progress and development in Synoptic criticism. Never could it be called 'stuffy orthodoxy'. Very rightly he urges that 'criticism does not stand still'; and very rightly he has put questions where all too long there have been assumptions. Particularly happy is his deliberate use of a great deal that is good and valuable in the methods of Form Criticism. How there has been real progress in this work is apparent from the fact that 'adumbrations of various aspects of [the position adopted in this study] may be found in Harnack, Streeter (in the Oxford Studies), Burney, Bishop Rawlinson, and the Form Critics' (p. 171).

A book to be wrestled with humbly.

ROLAND POTTER, O.P.