

in the *Comedy* between the goodness and the beauty of poetry, as he does in the *Convivio*, or admitted in the *Comedy* that 'each part of man has its own goodness' since according to *Purg.* 4, 5-6; 25, 72-5 the rational soul takes into itself all the lower 'souls', and Dante seems to repudiate an error, presumably his own in the *Convivio*. There is of course much that is common to the *Convivio* and the *Comedy*. If Dante emerges as orthodox, it is acknowledged that 'his theory of grace, if theory it can be called' is his weak point. Dante, however, was not 'technically a philosopher': he came to philosophy late when he was a poet of already seven years' standing and even fame, and he was always impassioned rather than methodically impartial. His emphasis is on the subjective *act* of the 'spiritual union' that is love, and on the joy of the soul's returning to the divine joy which caused it. Dante can move, in the *Comedy* at least, with clarity and firmness amid these high abstractions. Fr Foster promises further papers on the more concrete application of Dante's 'central insight' to justice, free-will and the limits of poetic expression. Perhaps he will drop the horrid word 'finalise' and see that 'causal' is not printed as 'casual'.

COLIN HARDIE

PROBLEMS IN THEOLOGY, VOL. I. THE SACRAMENTS. By John Canon McCarthy, D.D. (Brown and Nolan Ltd; 40s.)

This book contains classified replies to practical questions which originally appeared in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* and now made available in a new form at the request of readers. Perhaps they did not expect the price to be so high. The title somewhat belies the subject-matter, a good deal of which more properly pertains to Canon Law. This first volume deals with problems connected with the sacraments; a second volume is concerned with principles and precepts. The solutions given are generally sound, and are supported by good arguments and well-documented by reference to the latest rulings of the Holy See. In a book of this nature there are bound to be certain points about which all will not be in full agreement. The table of contents is well-classified and makes reference easy.

AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.

THE EARLY CHRISTIAN FATHERS. Edited and translated by Henry Bettenson. (Oxford University Press: London, Cumberlege; 16s.)

Mr Bettenson has compiled an anthology from St Clement to St Athanasius. Perhaps every anthology must be personal, still it is to be regretted that Minucius Felix and Theophilus of Antioch and Methodius of Olympus are all omitted since each was unique, and that St Justin is represented very inadequately. But Mr Bettenson's translations are always lucid and his notes objective. Once again he has shown his freedom from any sectarian bias and once again he has introduced Christian classics to a public that might otherwise have stayed ignorant of their existence.

G.M.