

example, or the 'devoting' of enemy peoples to utter destruction with Jericho and the Amalekites. For a history of Israelite religion, he says, such things demand full consideration; but for an Old Testament theology all that is not of the essence of the faith of Israel is irrelevant. There, I think, Dr Rowley is not doing justice to his native breadth of mind. That such things are secondary, of minor importance, no concern of such a course of lectures as this, is true enough. But that anything in the Scriptures should be called *irrelevant* to theology I find unacceptable. We must indeed be prepared never to be able to see the relevance of large tracts of the Bible, but that does not oblige us to deny it. And Dr Rowley would agree, I believe, that the very fact of Israel's faith in addition to its unique and distinctive essence, having so much in common with the religions of other nations and being rooted indeed in the general religious awareness of mankind, is something of immense theological importance—at any rate to the believer who is not a Jew but a Gentile.

EDMUND HILL, O.P.

PLATO AND THE CHRISTIANS. Passages from the writings of Plato selected and translated with an introduction by Adam Fox. (S.C.M. Press 21s.)

At the first glance this little book by the Archdeacon of Westminster seems rather too simple-minded to make any worthwhile contribution to the understanding of Plato's influence on the minds of Christians in the past or his importance for them in the present. This impression is created partly by the little Scriptural texts at the head of each extract which do not always fit very well, and partly by the choice of extracts some of which seem to be rather violently torn from their context and used without any consciousness of the formidable philosophical and theological problems which any attempt to bring them into contact with Christianity would raise if their probable real significance was understood. But this impression is deceptive, and when one reads the book a little more carefully one discovers that Canon Fox has done what he set out to do excellently, and that it was well worth doing. It is certainly not a book intended for professional philosophers or theologians (though some of them might profit by reading it). It is intended to show the ordinary Christian why Christians through the ages have found Plato interesting and important: and the passages chosen are those which would strike such an ordinary Christian reading through the Dialogues as having something to do in some way with his religion; the texts are simply meant to indicate why he might reasonably feel this. And all the passages of the greatest philosophical and theological importance are there (the great argument for the

existence of gods in *Laws X* is given in summary because of its length). The extremely good and clear translation is Canon Fox's own: he explains the difficulties of translating Plato in his Introduction, which also contains more good sense about Plato better expressed in a smaller space than it would be easy to find elsewhere.

A. H. ARMSTRONG

TEMPERAMENT, NERVES AND THE SOUL. By Rev. J. Massman, P.S.M. (The Mercier Press; 3s. 6d.)

The aim of this book is to help people with 'undue excitability of the feelings'. The author denies any claim to its being a scientific work, but immediately plunges into a threefold division of temperaments which is presented with all the aura of a well-established fact. Would that it were so. The extensive studies of Eysenck into the 'dimensions of personality' have not produced a system which satisfies everyone, how much less so with the arbitrary classification presented here. To what purpose is this division? It seems to me that the spiritual advice presented in the latter part of the book could well be given without a psychological approach which misleads the uninformed and tempts the informed to dismiss the whole of the book as worthless.

JOHN MARSHALL

PSYCHIATRY FOR ALL. By Dr H. Dobbstein. (Mercier Press; 3s. 6d.)

The title of this book was the first thing to arrest my attention. Psychiatry is the branch of medicine which treats mental disease. Why do all men need to know about mental disease? They do not have the same morbid interest in disease of the stomach or heart. It is stated that the object of the book is to enable the reader to judge objectively the mentality of his fellow-men, but is not the author perpetuating the analytical error of building up a concept of normality from a study of the abnormal? Is it likely that the reader will be helped towards a deeper psychological understanding by the account of the professor who gave his dying daughter a coffin for a Christmas present? When we see such mis-statements as that St Vitus Dance is infective, and when we find a serious recommendation that parents should leave a psychological analysis of themselves for the guidance of their children, the situation becomes ludicrous, and the book cannot be recommended.

JOHN MARSHALL

ESSAYS IN LIBERALITY. By Alec R. Vidler. (S.C.M.; 15s.)

It was held against Pius IX, as evidence of his obscurantism, that he condemned *Liberalismus*. But then so did Newman, and he was no bigot. And so does this loose collection of articles and lectures when