

language of modern psychology, philosophy and historical research, is an ultimate and inevitable fundamentalism.

The representation given here of Moses and the vocation of the Jewish people is not likely to be directly helpful to the Christian. But this book does give a clear insight into the mind of modern Judaism which is extremely valuable.

G.H.

MY LAST RETREAT. By Edward Leen, C.S.SP. (Mercier Press; 15s.)

These conferences for an eight-day retreat have the precision of a man's last instructions for the furtherance of his life's work. It is not the deadly precision of the crack shot but the creative quality of a visionary thinking in terms of eternal life with the concise mental concepts of a draughtsman. If the style seems at times *staccato* and the pace over-intense, it must be remembered that these are retreat conferences, a transcript of the spoken word. The tones of voice, the gestures, the facial expressions by which a retreat master indicates delicate nuances of feeling, smooths away severity or enlivens a remark with humour are missing. If Dr Leen had revised the work the result might have had more literary grace but could not have had more force. Each point is straight on the target. If it stings it is only to wake us to the realization that the grace of God is sufficient for us. If it draws blood it is to draw our attention to the blood that was shed for us.

Certain statements concerning the 'Protestant attitude' might be considered sweeping by a convert, while the injunction to be lady-like strikes an outmoded note at a time when every woman is called a lady, be she baroness or baggage. The conferences on the sacrament of penance are very helpful, but the information that confessors to nuns find their work laborious is no new discovery. The holy labourers on the other side of the confessional might be surprised to find how many nuns are inhibited in their desire to 'open out' by the atmosphere that comes through the screen. But these are very minor and personal objections and far outweighed by the inspired vigour of every conference.

Throughout the series there is a sense of urgency which startles the reader to a new receptivity. Although it was preached to a congregation engaged in missionary work, much of *My Last Retreat* will be of value to contemplative nuns. To these latter, whose spiritual horizons may become dimmed by that total lack of obvious result for obvious effort which is apt to undermine the roots of faith, this book will be invigorating. For all religious it will give a fresh outlook, perhaps a new sense of values and a deeper realization of the meaning and significance of the religious life.

P.C.C.