

One sentence in this book may call for discussion: 'All that was necessary for salvation was at least implicit in this written word of God' (the Epistles and Gospels). But surely none of the inspired writers thought they were composing, or even contributing to, a *complete manual of Christian Doctrine*?

R. P.

PLATO'S PHAEDO. By R. S. Bluck. (Routledge & Kegan Paul; 21s.)
THE ETHICS OF ARISTOTLE. Translated by J. A. K. Thomson. (Penguin Books; 2s. 6d.)

So many translations of the *Phaedo* have appeared in recent years that a new one must have special qualities if it is to justify its existence. Dr Bluck's version does possess those qualities; it will become indispensable for that growing class of readers who, with a minimum of Greek, nevertheless wish to make a serious study of Plato's philosophy. He has done for the *Phaedo* what Cornford did for the late dialogues: produced an accurate translation in good current English, with a page or two of commentary before each section of the dialogue, a thirty-page general introduction, notes on particular passages, and nine appendices that treat of more detailed questions of interpretation.

Very properly, it is the philosophy of the dialogue that receives Dr Bluck's chief attention. He argues strongly against the notion of a Form as merely an abstract term, what was later known as a 'universal'; he says that 'all the Forms are transcendent objective realities, and this must give them an ontological significance as well as a logical one; and they are all "causes" in the sense that they are responsible for the meaning and quasi-being of objects and acts in the sensible world—which must give them a metaphysical significance as well' (p. 180). This enables him to present the final 'proof of immortality' as plausible, even convincing if the premisses are admitted. It is in fact remarkable throughout how Dr Bluck, without treating Plato's arguments uncritically, nor distorting them by the use of modern ideas, does succeed in presenting them as still meriting our serious philosophical attention.

Aristotle provides a different problem for the translator. No one is likely to think of his work as merely literary; the difficulty is to round its angularities into something that is readable at all. Mr Thomson's version, which first appeared a few years ago, succeeds very well in this; it has a contemporary ring, which is helped out by the idea of throwing Aristotle's more disconnected *dicta* into the form of foot-notes. At times some of the precision is lost with its technicalities; Aristotle is a professional philosopher and never forgets it. There is an excellent introduction, and short comments on each section, reduced

to a mere sentence in later parts of the work; modern readers might have profitably received rather more help of this kind, particularly in the difficult sixth book on the intellectual virtues. But no better version could have been chosen by the editor of this admirable series of *Penguin Classics*; and incidentally it is a tribute to the present age (so often written off as uneducated), that a sufficiently wide public should exist to justify a cheap edition of a book like Aristotle's *Ethics*.

LAURENCE BRIGHT, O.P.

ST THOMAS AQUINAS: THEOLOGICAL TEXTS. Selected and translated with notes and an Introduction by Thomas Gilby. (Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press; 15s.)

All students of St Thomas, not least those not able to read him in the original or who are unfamiliar with the technical language he uses, will be grateful for this latest proof of Fr Gilby's vast knowledge and admiration for the works of the 'Universal Doctor'. The book provides a sequel and companion to *Philosophical Texts*, published in 1951. In that book he undertook the very difficult task of making an excision out of a theological setting of purely rational truths, though his selection was not exclusively confined to these. Such an excision can be, and was, justified by the author, though it is open to misinterpretation if it be thought that thomist theology is built, not on the word of Revelation, but on an almost complete human philosophy, deriving chiefly from Aristotle. In this new book no such danger is present. This selection of theological texts, together with others which indirectly bear on theology, is in the nature of a compendium of theology strictly so called. It is concerned primarily with principles which derive from faith in the Christian revelation and not those reached by unaided reason, and follows the plan of the *Summa Theologica*. It treats of such subjects as the Trinity, the Creation, the Fall, the New Creation, the Theological Virtues, the Incarnation, the Church, the Sacraments.

Fr Gilby rightly maintains the place of philosophy as ancillary to the work of making clear the sense of what is revealed, which is the job of the theologian. One might dispute the right to mingle theology with philosophy, or to extract philosophy from what is meant to illustrate theology, since the field of philosophy is bound strictly by what reason alone can tell us. But the case is different when reason is employed to elucidate the data of revelation so as to penetrate more deeply into its meaning. This is the fundamental contention which is the basis of this selection. In his admirable introduction the author says: 'While the attempt to separate St Thomas's philosophy from his theology may be partly justified, it is an impossible task to separate his theology from