

for example, has the theme of St John, that 'God so loved the world', on the cosmology of the *Timaeus* or the ethics of the *Gorgias*? Canon Fox has produced a stimulating introduction to Plato, but his book will not help to remove the common impression that Christianity was correctly interpreted by the Pelagians.

LAURENCE BRIGHT, O.P.

PELAGIUS. By John Ferguson. (Heffer, 15s.)

This is a prize-essay from Cambridge and should be judged as such. The account of the historical background is at times inaccurate and frequently misleading. St Augustine's doctrine of grace is quite unintentionally travestied. But Pelagius is treated perceptively as well as sympathetically and the essay deserved the award if only for the admirable chapter on the theology of his commentaries on St Paul.  
G.M.

STARS OF COMFORT. By Vincent McNabb, O.P. (Burns and Oates, 15s.)

The late Hilaire Belloc said he would go anywhere to hear Fr Vincent McNabb speak, and when listening to Fr McNabb's sermon at Cecil Chesterton's funeral he held it to be the finest piece of sacred oratory he had ever heard. At his best Father Vincent could touch the heights; but his sermons were not always oratory in the accepted sense and within the limits of the rules of the game. What was it that could attract Belloc, Chesterton and Baring and that simple character whom Fr Vincent used to call 'Biddy in the Basement'? It was some quality—hard to analyse, but unmistakable—in the man, a radiation of personality which made people say: 'poet' or 'saint'. True, he did not always touch a string in tune with every hearer's mood; but the sympathetic listener would always take away something—perhaps a stabbing phrase like: 'The world's prizes are for a select few: God's are for all', 'Chastity is the romance of wedded love; unchastity is only its tragedy', 'A drill-master makes an indifferent apostle'; or more often he would go away with the general impression of contact with a mind at once dynamic and holy.

The printed word is obviously not able to convey this magical effect, and although a book of sermons is not the same as the living word we are grateful to Fr Vincent's faithful amanuensis, Miss Dorothy Finlayson, who has taken down his words, as spoken, and given us this book. He rarely wrote his sermons and, but for her careful reporting, so much of his wisdom would have been lost.

She has gathered together thirty-six retreat-conferences and grouped them under six headings so that they form a progressive study of the spiritual life. They were given at the Cenacle and they are so arranged and edited that they would provide excellent matter for a full-length