

THE ETHICS OF BRAIN SURGERY. Edited by Dom Peter Flood, O.S.B., M.D., M.C.H., J.C.L. (Mercier Press; 5s.)

This short translation from the French in the Cahiers Laënnec series consists of four essays, each under different authorship. The first outlines the basic facts underlying cerebral surgery; the next two deal with the indications for, and effects of, such operations, the last with the moral considerations. The three medical writers are orthodox, and expert in their own fields: the moral questions are handled by a priest. In themselves, all four essays are serious contributions.

Unfortunately, the book as a whole, lacking firm editorial direction, emerges too detailed and overlapping for lay readers, yet too superficial for doctors. There results an impression of uncertainty on the parts of the medical authors whether they were writing for the profession or the laity—a particular pity, as Dr Houdart's factual summary is excellent as a short medical introduction and Professor Prick's researches could usefully be evaluated in the medical press. Dr Bertagna compromises with valueless references to authors but not their works.

The need of the laity, therefore, remains unsatisfied for a short, clear-cut outline of the salient facts about the types of procedure; their indications, their immediate and prolonged effects and the emergent moral issues. Doctors will find an unbalanced play-down of the importance of modern limited techniques in relation to post-operative personality depletion, as against the largely outmoded standard leucotomy.

Père Tesson's otherwise judicial chapter on morality omits the fundamental consideration, whether this form of operation is a mutilation like castration; wrong, therefore, in itself. He omits also to mention the post-operative possibility of foresightlessness leading to unconcern for one's ultimate end.

Misprints are less frequent and the translation a trifle less grim than in earlier publications; but it lacks essential guidance upon the difference of psychiatric terminology in the two languages.

SEYMOUR SPENCER

THEOLOGY LIBRARY. Volume I. Introduction to Theology. Edited by A. M. Henry, O.P. (Mercier Press; 21s.)

Along with the liturgical revival recent years have seen something like an awakening of Catholic theological thinking, of biblical and of patristic scholarship in France. Among its most valuable products has been the four-volume *Initiation théologique*, edited and written by French Dominicans. It is the first volume of this work which is now given us in an English translation.

It may safely be asserted that the writers of these volumes have