

125 pages. It sets out to define man's different conceptions of the after life and attempts to see what they have contributed to contemporary beliefs and how far they can help us in discovering the truth. Our interest is first caught by the scope of the historical survey. The first section, mostly archaeological, sketches the beliefs in immortality among Celts, Germans, Slavs, Egyptians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Jews, Christians, Mahommedans, India, China, Japan. An enormous array that is perhaps a little too dazzling for clear sight. Then comes the inquiry into philosophical notions as such from Plato to Gabriel Marcel. Again there is the same scope. This is entirely laudable and one only complains that perhaps too much space, and emphasis by proportion, is given to nineteenth-century philosophies and modern investigations and occultism. Nevertheless one is impressed in the end by the genuine 'objective' manner in which Professor Grégoire sets out his ideas. Being 'objective' or 'detached' in many modern English faculties of philosophy has an unfortunate connotation because it seems to have bred not devotion but indifference to truth, and the 'detachment' of many of our own writers is such that they present their views as just another phase in an ever changing fashion parade. But here at least the author does allow us to believe there is a real truth beyond everyone's ponderings, and that is very refreshing.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS. By John Fahy. (Browne and Nolan; 6s.)

This book is not designed to appeal to those who are over-sensitive to language; the phrases of the pulpit are plentiful—'each and every action'—and there is here and there a dramatization that is hardly necessary—during the consecration 'a tense dramatic silence descends upon the church'. It would however be unjust to judge the book by these things alone. The subtitle is 'The Greatest Thing on Earth', and the author's purpose is quite simply to convince us of this fact: this he does by going step by step through the Mass and giving us a simple commentary on the words and actions. 'Simple' is the keynote of his treatment and it would be a mistake to be repelled by the naïveté which makes it possible for him to say, 'Few acts of worship give more joy and happiness . . . than the act of genuflection', and 'Approaching to receive Holy Communion the feeling of one's personal unworthiness naturally predominates'. If we do not perhaps share these experiences, or not all the time, we should at least reflect that they spring from a state of soul which our Lord commended, the simplicity of doves, and our only complaint about this book is that we do not also hear enough about the guile of serpents.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.