

Plotinus. By A. H. Armstrong. (George Allen and Unwin; 10s. 6d.)

It may be a significant fact that in this country, unlike France and Germany, Plotinus has chiefly occupied the attention of scholars outside university circles. One has only to recall the two basic works of Dean Inge and Thomas Whittaker or that noble piece of English prose, Mackenna's translation. However, something like the German translation by Harder has remained an urgent need whether for the general reader or the scholar, the more so now that we have a fully revised text of the first half of the *Enneads*, which it has been rightly said marked the opening of a new era for Plotinus studies. There will doubtless be general agreement that the author of *The Intelligible Universe in Plotinus*, now Professor of Greek in the University of Liverpool, was the very man to fill this gap. The editor of the series *Ethical and Religious Classics of East and West* deserves our thanks for sponsoring a new and scholarly translation of Plotinus into English. True, it is only a volume of selections, but this does not diminish its value, for Dr Armstrong has given us, so to say, a companion to his former book, collecting all the texts illustrating its theme: the three hypostases, the One or Good, *Nous*, soul, our selves, the return of the soul. The translation seems to be as faithful as possible to the original and its clarity is no small achievement. One cannot read again without a certain emotion the familiar passage, a key text for the interpretation of Plotinus, in which he tells us, as in a moment of confidence, of the decisive experience of his life: 'Often I have woken up out of the body to myself and have entered into myself, going out from all other things. I have seen a beauty wonderfully great and felt assurance that then most of all I belonged to the better part. I have lived to the full the best life and come to identity with the Divine. . . . Then after that rest in the Divine, when I have come down from *Nous* to discursive reasoning, I am puzzled how I ever came down, and how my soul has come to be in the body. . . .'

A helpful introduction gives us an account of Plotinus's life and writings, his philosophical and religious background, and a brief but excellent survey of his philosophical system. This is a book to engage the interest of a wide audience and will assist many of us not only to know a great man, but also to enlarge the horizons of our own thought.

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SACRIFICE IN GREEK AND ROMAN RELIGIONS AND EARLY JUDAISM.

By Royden Keith Yerkes, D.D. (Adam and Charles Black; 18s.)

SACRIFICE AND PRIESTHOOD, JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN. By S. C. Gayford. (Methuen; 10s. 6d.)

Of these two works by Anglican authors the former receives a

foreword by the Professor of History of Religions, University of Chicago, the latter a preface by the Anglican Bishop of Colchester, and in each case the scholarship of the author is warmly commended. Dr Yerkes writes an introduction to a subject that he believes occupies too little the attention of students of religion. He does not use Mr Gayford's book, which was first published in 1924 and has only recently been re-issued.

Their judgments vary concerning the liturgical situation in our Lord's time. 'By the time of Jesus hardly one Jew in ten had ever seen a sacrifice.' (Dr Yerkes, p. 198.) 'We have good ground then for taking the Levitical regulations as the working standard of sacrifice at the time of the birth of Christ. [The Priestly Code] for many centuries actually entered into the religious life of the people and formed a part of their training in preparation for the Gospel.' (Mr Gayford, pp. 10, 11.)

Both are concerned with the light on the meaning of Christian sacrifice that can be gained from a study of ancient sacrificial conceptions. Rightly, they stress the oneness of the sacrifice of Christ, on the Cross and in the Eucharist. They show how in the Old Testament we can discern (after the application of higher criticism) the preparation for the Christian idea of sacrifice. Special attention is given to the sin offering and to the symbolism of blood in the ancient sacrifices. As a collection of references both books are of value to the student and he will find the discussions helpful, and will be led to some of the authorities.

The question of the status of the whole enquiry needs more examination than the authors consider necessary. In common with many they are vexed by the idea of destruction as involved in sacrifice and prefer to reduce its importance. More attention to Pauline theology might have been useful here, especially to the notion of 'destroying the body of sin'. In general they neglect the metaphysics of sacramental theology.

On Greek and Roman sacrifices Dr Yerkes has much to say by way of analysis and classification. He indicates points where we can see in Gentile beliefs connected with sacrifice approximations to its real significance as achieved in Christianity. His work is particularly valuable in showing how permeated men's religious outlook then was with a sense of offering and sacrifice that has since been almost obliterated in civilized lands. And when there has been the subsequent abandonment of the Christian concept that displaced it, the term 'sacrifice' took on a wholly impoverished and secular connotation.

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