PREFACE

Animus in this its fourth volume continues the general policy of the earlier volumes which has by now gained the interest of a considerable readership — at the same time to encourage interpretations of older philosophical and literary works as far as possible free of current assumptions and then to consider how in this objective consideration they may clarify a contemporary culture which finds itself in an abstract and uncertain relation to what it values most. The articles on Platonism published in this volume fall into three groups. Those of the first group treat very differently of relations between contemporary thought and the older or original Platonism. Then several are about that Platonism, commenting on particular Dialogues or on Aristotle's criticism of it. In the articles of a third group, one looks to Augustine's reaction to ancient scepticism, two of them to Neoplatonism, the one considering its various forms simply in their ancient setting, the other its renewal in this departing century as enlightening contemporary culture.

I

F.L. Jackson brings together the flight in contemporary philosophy from conceptual thought to language as more primordial and the opposite movement in Plato from the ambiguity of language to the clarity and stability of thought. His article shows Cratylus as undermining the assumption that language is the 'house of being' and not rather itself housed in being.

Neil Robertson regards the Platonism of Leo Strauss and an influential school, through which they would effect a purgation of the destructive subjectivity of Machiavelli, Hobbes and their progeny. Plato, set in the perspective of a rejected modernity, is not equivalent to the Plato of the Dialogues, but has an interest of its own.

II

Paul Epstein writes on Symposium. The first three speeches on the nature of 'eros' bring loved, lover and the good of their relation to the radical division between a tragic and a comic unification of these elements. Socrates, inspired by Diotima, then raises the argument from poetry to philosophy, in which the elements are seen to belong to an undivided movement. Socrates returned to himself from this inspiration can at the end discourse with Aristophanes whether the same poet can be master of the tragic and the comic art. How far is the philosophical unification of the opposed arts adequate to either of them?

Vernon Provencal shows how the contest between Socrates and Protagoras as to the meaning of a few verses of Simonides is central to an understanding of the whole argument of Protagoras. Through the 'agon' the division between a rhetorical use of myth and an abstract unity of thought is broken through, and Socrates can show Protagoras how the two are engaged in a common work uniting the rational good and the immediate good of pleasure.
Kyle Fraser writes on relations between 'separate' ideas of Plato and Aristotle's concept of substance, which he argues involves also a certain 'separation' of substance from accidents and a containment of substance in the divine thinking.

An article by James Doull comments on the Parmenides as far as the 'hypotheses' - the first part of a study of the whole dialogue and its relation to Sophist, Philebus and the crisis in the Academy which had its resolution in the Aristotelian philosophy.

III

A paper by Bernard Wills examines closely the logic of Augustine's response to ancient scepticism in his Contra Academicos.

Another paper by James Doull outlines the history of Neoplatonism, showing the stages of a logical development leading eventually to a point where a new philosophical beginning was seen to be necessary -- in the revised Augustinianism of Descartes.

Wayne Hankey follows meticulously the intricate history of Neo-neoplatonism, especially in France, from Henri Bergson, Bréhélier and others who in the earlier twentieth century broke from the tradition of Modern Philosophy to the clerical and lay philosophers of more recent years, who with many variations are in common persuaded that that philosophy responds better to contemporary spiritual interests than the modern deviation which seemed for a time to have replaced it.