completion of the old Israel and to lead them on to the study of the whole. But all too many teachers know all too little of the Old or New Testaments to guide their pupils and indeed need a guide themselves. In the absence of a handy scriptural scholar, books must be made to serve but *The Modern Reader's Guide to the Gospels* does not seem the answer. It is too often too simple and obvious, too often an easy paraphrase, too skimpy on St John. There are a number of interpretations with which Catholics will not agree but these are obvious.

PETER HASTINGS

THE PHILOSOPHERS OF GREECE, by R. S. Brumbaugh. London, *Allen & Unwin*. 1966. 35*s*.

This book is an opportunity missed. It is an introduction to the 'exciting intellectual odyssey' (sic) of Greek philosophy up to and including Aristotle, and it purports to give both the results of the best modern scholarship on what the ancients actually said, and the philosophical implications of what they said.

There is a place for such a book, but this one does not fill it. On the philosophical side, it is far too casual. Thus: Thales invented the ideas of matter, physics, science and philosophy (p. 11); the Pythagoreans invented pure mathematics, and the ideas of mathematical proof and form (p. 30); and so on. Little more is said. But a lot more has to be said. For example, it is not immediately obvious that people before Thales lacked the idea of matter. Did they not have adjectives like 'wooden', 'brazen', etc., and does this not show that they had the idea of matter in one sense? If in some other sense they lacked this idea, it has to be set out much more carefully what precisely this sense is.

But did Thales invent the idea of matter in any sense? This has been doubted, and this point brings me to the question of the standard of scholarship in this book, which does not seem to me to be such as to encourage confidence in the author's general contentions. Brumbaugh gives an authority for every view which he adopts. But this is little good. What we want is the reasons why he adopts this view, and rejects all the others.

Two sentences on p. 30 will serve as an example of this looseness in the scholarship and in the reasoning:

> Answering Thales's original question, Pythagoras and his followers held that all things are numbers. His study of the mathematical ratios of musical scales and planets led Pythagoras to believe that quantitative laws of nature could be found in all subject matters.

Now, in the first place, as we have seen, it has been doubted whether Thales was concerned with the question, 'What is matter?' It has been suggested that his question was rather as to how things began. But this receives no mention. Second, it is doubtful whether Pythagoras reached his view that all things are numbers by trying to answer the question, 'what is matter?' It seems that his philosophy may have arisen by an entirely different route. Third, this passage seems to imply that there is some connection between the view, which is mentioned in the second sentence, that things have a quantitative aspect, and the view, which is mentioned in the first, that things *are* numbers. But the one is surely a far cry from the other. And last, whereas as Aristotle says (see *Metaphysics* 985b23 – 986a3, 987a20 – 22, 989a99 – 990a32), it seems that all that one can say is that *one can perhaps salvage* from the confusions of the Pythagoreans a dim realization that things have a quantitative aspect, Brumbaugh has no hesitation in attributing the full awareness of this to them.

Not a book then, for the beginner. It might perhaps interest those who already know about the Presocratics, Plato and Aristotle, since it does raise some philosophical questions. But I must confess that I found it difficult to see this book as anything more than an example of that type of education, familiar to us from Salinger, which seems to deserve to the full Heraclitus's strictures about the learning of many things which does not teach understanding. Hence we find on p. 47 a not particularly illuminating comparison between Heraclitus and a Japanese poet, Basho, who said:

> 'An ancient temple pond; jump of a frog; the River of Heaven.'

Very nice poetry, no doubt, but what has it got to do with Heraclitus?

BRIAN GRAHAM

THE ELIZABETHANS AND THE IRISH, by David Beers Quinn. *Cornell University Press; London; Oxford University Press*. 40*s*.

During the sixteenth century the older Gaelic society, already deeply disturbed by centuries of sporadic English aggression, was subjected to a policy of coherent attack by a modern nation for the first time. By Queen Elizabeth's death the English conquest was almost complete. Pro-