

human person from its dissection by the specialists. There is overmuch flogging of Freudian dead horses, a good deal of discussion of writers little known in England, and a heavy debt in matters biological to Adolf Portmann, and in matters psychological to Jung. Jung, however, comes in for some pointed and intelligent criticism for his comparative disregard for the psyche's functions of self-transcendence; but this is spoiled by carrying a comparison of Jung with the Gnostic Basilides to absurdity and calumny.

Dr von Siebenthal's book on Guilt and Guilt-sense is much less ambitious in scope, but is quite the best of the bunch. Yet it, too, from the familiar symptoms of pathological guilt, fans out far and wide into consideration of normal, objective 'existential' guilt (carefully distinguished from moral-theological guilt), for which pathological guilt is usually an unrealistic substitute. This leads to consideration of the aims and limitations of psychotherapy, of symbolic and physical death (the undoubted 'end' of human existence as we know it), of the function of hope, of the nature of health, and of the blessings and dangers of psychiatry. Guilt itself is shown to offer a viewpoint for a new systematization of the recognized psycho-pathological syndromes, and an approach to psychosis as 'short-circuited self-realization'. It is a closely thought-out and densely written book, but well repays the demands it makes. The author, despite the theorizing, keeps his feet on the ground, and constantly returns us to concrete case-histories and familiar facts of experience. It is by no means a 'Catholic book', but it may be doubted if anybody but a Catholic could have written it. For some readers it might make uncommonly good 'spiritual reading'.

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

ÉTUDES DE MÉTAPHYSIQUE BIBLIQUE. By Claude Tresmontant. (J. Gabalda; 800fr.)

In his *Essai sur la Pensée Hébraïque* M. Tresmontant treated profoundly and originally of what he believes to be the philosophy which underlies the Bible. The Hebrew view of God, man and the world, he contends, rests upon a metaphysical *Weltanschauung* as coherent and distinctive as any other philosophical system, and equally capable of being isolated and criticized. Essentially it is a metaphysic of creation, 'of the Uncreated Being and of created being'. For him creation is 'une genèse irréversible comportant un commencement et orientée vers un terme' (p.9). 'The world is in the process of being made beneath our eyes, of ripening, and this genesis is progressing in a direction which the prophets of Israel reveal to us' (p.9). At the risk of seeming over-facile, it may be said at once that the metaphysic which M. Tresmontant independently discovers underlying the Bible is substantially the

metaphysic epitomized by St Thomas in the First Way, a metaphysic of becoming, empirically observable, and leading to an ultimate cause of becoming or, as M. Tresmontant puts it, from created being in its essential transitoriness to the transcendent and absolute Creator. There is however this vital difference that whereas St Thomas argues from the phenomenon of becoming as such, M. Tresmontant discerns in the Bible a concept of the special instance of becoming which modern physics calls Evolution, and which he regards as creation *in fieri*. In effect he feels that modern physics justifies him in arguing along the *per accidens* line of causality to prove that the evolution of the world must of its nature have a principle from which it started and a term towards which it is working, the very concept which, he feels, lies at the root of Hebrew thought.

Having isolated this metaphysic of creation in his previous work, the author here tests it in comparison with other systems; his attitude at this point is resolutely empirical. 'Une épreuve s'avère décisive pour évaluer une métaphysique, c'est de la confronter avec le réel lui-même, tel que les sciences positives progressivement nous le découvrent.' (p.10.) The central argument of this book is that modern physics demands more than ever the biblical (i.e. Christian) metaphysic as its corollary, reveals more than ever the radical failure of idealist or materialist alternatives to account for the observed phenomena. Taking Gnosticism as his focal point, and ranging from the ancient Greek philosophies to the German phenomenologists, M. Tresmontant contends that all metaphysics depends for its validity on the relationship posited between the Absolute and the world. Any theory which attributes the essential properties of the Absolute Creator to the world or to any part of it is shown when confronted with reality to involve inherent contradictions. Only the biblical metaphysic of creation is completely free from mythological presuppositions, completely adequated to reality as we now know it.

It will be apparent that this book is even more philosophical in character, even less biblical, than its title suggests. M. Tresmontant's approach reminds one of the work of M. Jean Guitton, and especially of M. Neher, whose *L'Essence du Prophétisme* has been strongly influenced by this author's ideas and whose conclusions are strikingly similar, though much more closely related to the text of the Bible. Hebrew thought is remarkably free from creation myths and theogonies, which have vitiated pagan forms of thought and left vestigial traces on the later philosophies. Creation is not the triumphant conclusion to a conflict between the forces of good and evil in which a new god emerges supreme and fashions a pre-existent matter to his will. It is the act of the Absolute, Transcendent, and Eternal God making the

world out of nothing 'in a beginning', and allowing man to co-operate with him in the continuing process of developing it till it reaches its predestined maturity. Time is the measure of this irreversible process, and it is time which is the primary phenomenon enabling us to perceive the ultimate rightness of the biblical metaphysic by measuring it against reality.

This is a courageous and stimulating approach, all the more valuable, one feels, for being so boldly opposed to current trends of thought among biblical scholars. If it is nothing else, it is a salutary antidote to any undue influence we may have felt from the exponents of biblical anthropology, or from the Myth and Ritual schools. The mere fact that M. Tresmontant treats of the content of Scripture as a truth to be tested rather than as a mentality to be investigated—that in itself is salutary. Yet again and again his theory seems over-simplified to the point of naïveté. It will satisfy neither the philosopher, nor the physicist, nor the exegete—him, perhaps least of all; indeed it can hardly fail at some point or other to exasperate each in turn. The hazardous nature of the philosophy speaks for itself. The theory fails to account for the most vital elements of Hebrew thought—the Day of Yahweh, for instance, or the concept underlying the Sabbatical laws. Yet M. Tresmontant deserves to be heard with patience. The discerning will be able to winnow out elements in this theory which are of lasting importance. If I have failed to convey this it is my fault as a reviewer, not M. Tresmontant's as an adventurous and penetrating philosopher of the Bible.

JOSEPH BOURKE, O.P.

EASTERN CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA. By Cardinal Eugène Tisserant.

Translated and adapted by E. R. Hambye, s.j. (Longmans; 25s.)

Among missionary countries India is distinguished by having a large nucleus of indigenous Christians, of Syrian rite, whose history goes back to the early centuries of the Church; unhappily, they are now divided, into Catholics, Jacobites, Reformed and others. India's political independence, and such symptoms as the emergence of the Church of South India, give these ancient Indian Christians a special importance and interest at this time, and they are now getting some of the attention they deserve. To the *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, vol. xiv, pt 2 (1941), Cardinal Tisserant contributed a long article entitled 'Syro-Malabare (Église)'. This learned study has been translated by Father E. R. Hambye, s.j., Professor of Ecclesiastical History in St Mary's College, Kurseong, West Bengal, who has revised and added to the original with the author's approval.

After a couple of chapters on the early days (the conclusion about the St Thomas tradition, on page 10, is surely too confident?), the