

the line of thought that unifies the historical narrative, and it is a pity that the author felt himself impelled to shirk the fullness of the implications which he brings to light. There are several places where the conclusion is obviously thrusting at his reluctant mind, that the health of European society today needs renewed acceptance of all three of the main traditions that he describes, the religious legacy of Israel (supernatural faith in Christianity), the Greek ideal of freedom and the Roman reverence for law, the last two being unified and informed by the first. But when it comes to the point, we read: 'For a world-view centred in sense there must be substituted a world-view centred in God. This in no way implies a sterile return to the tradition of medievalism'. After that last neat portmanteau sentence packed so full of muddle and prejudice one is not surprised to find the Conclusion presenting 'The Christian religion as the synthesis of the Hebraic and Hellenic legacies' (only). The author shows clearly enough that he did not really think the tradition of medievalism sterile. No one would advocate a sterile return to anything. But a fruitful return to the tradition of medievalism must mean a return to the church which inherits the Roman discipline, a thought from which the argument keeps shying away. The Catholic reader will not always be satisfied with accounts of Christian doctrine, e.g., we are told that it is impossible to 'draw any clear line of demarcation between those of Christ's actions which are due to his divine and those which are due to his human nature', St Cyril of Alexandria being interpreted in a Monophysite sense in support of this position.

Ivo THOMAS, O.P.

EXISTENTIALISM. By Guido de Ruggiero, with an Introduction by Rayner Heppenstall. (Secker & Warburg; 5s.)

EXISTENTIALISME ET ACTE D'ETRE. By Benoit Pruche. O.P. (B. Arthaud; Grenoble and Paris, 140fr.)

Professor de Ruggiero abuses the existentialists on the first page and calls them self-deceivers on the second; a quick start, even for such a short essay. There has, however, been some provocation, and one can sympathise with the Professor's complaint.

But there is not much to recommend in this book except the last four pages. Mr Heppenstall's introduction is well-informed on the whole, but de Ruggiero's historical sketch is decidedly ungenerous—perhaps because he dislikes both Christianity and Atheism which seem to be the two opposed outcomes of the movement (so to call it). He abominates Heidegger and sneers at Marcel. His idealism revolts against philosophers who treat sin and death not only as data to be understood, but also as indications of our actual position in reality. For de Ruggiero the notion of 'nothing' is purely and simply and in every sense a mental negation of being; in *no* sense at all does nothing precede being. Hence our existence is in no sense *ex nihilo*; it does not, in fact, connote a reality suspended between nothing and God—

essence. In a further and longer section the analysis is pursued into the human situation, into the problem of liberty dramatically raised by Sartre. A brief but valuable book.

KENELM FOSTER, O.P.

EGO, HUNGER AND AGGRESSION. By F. S. Sperls, M.D. (Allen and Unwin; 12s. 6d.)

This book by a South African psychiatrist claims in its subtitle to be a 'Revision of Freud's Theory and Method'. 'Revision' is an understatement: if the emphasis on hunger (as against sex) makes it positively anti-Freudian, the emphasis on Ego makes it anti-analytic altogether. Suggestive use is made of biology and physiology, of Gestalt-psychology, and of the 'Holism' of Field-Marshal Smuts; but little is left of Freud (despite due honour to an outmoded pioneer) except his most naive conceptions of religion as obsession and of God as hallucination.

One man's meat is another man's poison, and the adage is supremely true in the function which the author calls mental metabolism. This book is not every man's meat, and it is nobody's cup of tea. It is no food, either, for what Dr Perls calls the 'hanging-on bite'; but the theoretical chapters will often reward the demands they make on incisors and molars.

The last part of the book contains much excellent advice in practical technique; it would gain had the practical exercises been recommended more modestly for mental hygiene and after-care rather than as therapy. The chapters on 'Concentration on Eating', 'Visualisation', 'Sense of Actuality', 'Internal Silence', 'Body Concentration' and 'Assimilation of Projections' could be safely recommended to nearly everybody who is well enough to put them into execution. They can be theoretically justified as well by the Aristotelian-Thomist conception of the inter-relation of psyche and organism as by the author's own more problematic theories. But the exercises in the 'First Person Singular' might encourage inflation, no less than the self-deception which the author rightly deprecates in Couéism, if practised by the immature. His equation of normality and extraversion should be a sufficient index both to his strength and his limitations; the book as a whole cannot be recommended to the uncritical or to those who fondly suppose that neurosis is amenable to any panacea and does not require individual attention. V.W.

MAMRE: *Essays in Religion*. By Martin Buber, translated by Greta Hort. (Cumberlege: Melbourne University Press; 12s. 6d.)

BETWEEN MAN AND MAN. By Martin Buber, translated by Ronald Gregor Smith (Kegan Paul; 12s. 6d.)

Professor Buber has hitherto been known to English readers only by his stimulating essay in existential thinking, *I and Thou*, and by his fascinating *Jewish Mysticism and the Legends of Baalshem* with its charming anecdotes of the Chassidist movement. In *Mamre* may be found the bond which links these two seemingly varied preoccupa-