

Freud's psychology, establishing freedom of the will. Finally he shows that life cannot have arisen by chance from the non-living, because of its strict demands on environment. His treatment is competent, but too self-assured; despite his repeated plea for humility, he leaves an impression of philosophical arrogance. It gives the book an old-fashioned air, reminiscent of an age of apologetics now fortunately past.

PHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY. By Lord Cherwell. (O.U.P.; 2s. 6d.)

In the first Grosseteste memorial lecture, Lord Cherwell again shows us that, whatever may be true of the rank and file, distinguished scientists are both aware of the wider implications of their subject and capable of discussing them in admirably clear terms. The philosophical difficulties of modern physics could hardly have been better put in the compass of a single lecture. Lord Cherwell touches on the new ideas of space and time in physics, the dichotomy of wave and particle, and the apparent beginning in time of the cosmos. His conclusion is that the time has come for a 'metaphysical check-up' on fundamental concepts such as object, cause, space, time, which scientists have up to now accepted rather uncritically. 'The divorce between physics and philosophy has to my mind been unfortunate. Both sides would in my view benefit if they co-operated as they did in Bishop Grosseteste's day.' Philosophers would certainly agree with this conclusion, and there are signs that they are beginning to realize their responsibilities in the matter. On the other hand they might approve less of certain other remarks in the lecture. Lord Cherwell sometimes suggests that physical theories are largely a matter of taste: 'the physicist does not claim, or at any rate ought not to claim, that the hypothetical model he imagines is a true picture of the world'. If this is necessarily the case, it is no use calling on philosophy for help; the question has already been begged.

LIVING AND KNOWING. By E. W. F. Tomlin. (Faber; 25s.)

Mr Tomlin's plea is that the natural world does not contain its own explanation, but remains unintelligible so long as we refuse to recognize the reality beyond it; he prefers to describe this reality as 'metabiological' rather than 'metaphysical', since biology today is more open to this sort of completion than physics. He insists on the continuity of experience through the different levels of life, mind and spirit; the spiritual and the physical are not to be found in separate and alien realms. At every level, organic activity is controlled by form, not mere spatial pattern but a dynamic 'theme' which through time brings the organism into being. All activity is thus directed, and even in the simplest creature life means self-enjoyment, while on the other hand

conscious activity remains closely bound to physical organism. The activity is controlled by ideal values which each organism realizes; at the conscious level these values are understood by the metaphysician in non-discursive knowing.

This is reminiscent of Whitehead, and behind him of Aristotle; but a brief summary gives little idea of Mr Tomlin's range of thought. His book includes penetrating criticisms of many philosophical and scientific theses; eventually he takes us through mystical experience to the edge of revealed truth. Yet on the whole he is more impressive than convincing. His thought is too close-packed to be fully worked out; too much is expressed through other people's ideas and words. The reader is hard put to know where he is being led, and his appreciation of the frequent insights is drowned in the general flood. Mr Tomlin admires Scheler; he suffers from a similar failure of style. But his next book could well be very important indeed.

LAURENCE BRIGHT, O.P.

ST MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR: THE ASCETIC LIFE. THE FOUR CENTURIES ON CHARITY. Translated by Polycarp Sherwood, O.S.B., S.T.D. Ancient Christian Writers XXI. (Longmans; 25s.)

St Maximus is a theologian, according to Dom Sherwood, rather in the sense in which St John is a theologian than that in which we speak of St Thomas as one. For the coherence of St Maximus' thought 'does not derive from the systematization of the Church's teaching in function of some humanly-posed principle or philosophy'. This is surely a judgment very much from outside: St Thomas would not have written his philosophy so far into his theology unless he had been convinced that it was the true one, and therefore equally, though not equally directly, from God. The theology of St John comes directly from God, is part of our Christian Revelation; St Maximus meditates on this revelation in the light of the experience of the contemplative life, St Thomas in the light of the experience of a Christian philosopher. This is surely St Maximus' true greatness; although the *Centuries* are professedly a catena of quotations and paraphrases from the Fathers, a weight of personal experience can be felt behind each one of them. Charity commands love of our neighbour and the keeping of the commandments, and therefore a purification of our affections through the ascetic life: this is St Maximus' central theme. Both the works translated here were written for monks, and we should keep this very much in mind when reading passages like the following: 'one is then able to entemn women when, after withdrawal into solitude, one properly emaciates his body with self-mastery'. This attitude to women is the one likely to shock us most; several times they are placed among