

gives so little space to the Marxist critique of religion. Whatever may be thought of its validity, its historical importance can hardly be denied.

Yet on the whole the survey is admirably comprehensive and erudite, and though it represents a frankly existentialist's-eye view, there is very little distortion. Inevitably, the author's own conclusions are controversial. At the very end of the book, he quotes with approval Bultmann's dictum that 'the question of God and the question of myself are identical' (p. 376). Now while it would be agreed by all Christians that one cannot know the truth about oneself without taking account of one's relationship to God, to give full assent to Bultmann's proposition is to come perilously near to admitting that discourse about God is *merely* a particularly solemn kind of discourse about oneself. This is a danger to which an existentialist theology is particularly prone; if the followers of Barth and the exponents of linguistic philosophy have anything in common, it is that they provide means by which this tendency may be counteracted. Though these both get fair and extended treatment from the author, it may be doubted whether he has given them due weight in his conclusions.

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THE GUITTON JOURNALS, 1952-1955, translated by Frances Forrest; Harvill Press; 36s.

English readers who are generally familiar with the French literary or philosophical scene are, I think, possibly less aware of Jean Guilton than of any of his contemporaries; and this is the more surprising since one of his earliest books is a still useful study of Newman's *Essay on Development* which shows a sympathetic knowledge not only of the Victorian background but also of the philosophical tradition in which Newman's ideas are rooted. M. Guilton's mind, in spite of this, is a very 'Frenchy' one, in the sense that it is deeply involved with the seriousness of those things which belong to the French intellectual tradition and only (at any rate in this *Journal*) moderately concerned with what lies outside it. The title itself is a little misleading, even though it is transposed from the French text, which also calls the book, more accurately, *Etudes et Rencontres*. There is no Pepsysian jotting down of the fascinating trivia of everyday life, but a series of long meditations on ideas and people, formally edited by the author himself. We sacrifice some spontaneity, but we gain enormously in the observation of what he regards as the main purpose of his thought. 'The core of this Journal', he writes, 'is a meditation on Being . . . Everyday love, everyday existence, orderly, sombre and splendid; country, land, religion—lived out in time. In fact "Incarnation" in all its varieties and forms.'

Such a formality of approach seems to suit the French academic mind, of which M. Guilton is perhaps one of today's most distinguished examples. And yet as soon as one has said this, one realises that there are in him certain reserva-

tions which belie the clear discipline which that mind is commonly supposed to adore. On the direct pursuit of an object, he has this to say: 'It is true that the thing one wants too much eludes one. The will reaches out and gets entangled in itself. Montaigne observed this in games of chance; the winner is he who plays without trying too hard. Bacon, too, said that in order to succeed we must not aim at the main object, but achieve it as though we were trying for something else. And I have often noticed that the best gains are realized through some secondary indirect desire, by the methods of the saint or the poet, who at the summit of the soul has renounced possession, and whom destiny rewards with a fortuitous joy'. This lilies-of-the-field method of success by the tangential approach is applied chiefly by him to the history of ideas. 'One is not', he adds, 'effective through success but rather on the margins of it. Loisy's audience was negligible. So put what you do into cedarwood caskets. Throw bottles in the sea!'

There are corollaries of this attitude in the desire not to be excessively clear or single-minded: 'I want a kind of "wrapping" of joy—even a certain carelessness and nonchalance—around what is most deeply serious. Plato, Montaigne, La Fontaine show me the way. Nowadays I find models of this kind hard to come by. We have classified types too much . . . That is why I always feel an affinity with the intermediate stage of Purgatory, where I sense a strange mingling of deep sadness and growing hope. I do not like excess and dithyrambics. I like praise emerging from shadow where light and shade are intermingled. I would like to be criticized sympathetically, to be praised with reservation.' It is not hard to see why he drew so much enjoyment from the curious imprisonment to which the chances of war brought him. In February 1945 the Germans lodged him for a while in the castle of Colditz where they kept both a hard core of prisoners known for previous escapes and also the *Prominente*, relatives of English statesmen or of royalty like the Master of Elphinstone, Lord Lascelles, Lord Haig, Lt Michael Alexander, and the Polish General Bor Komorowski ('a cultivated, unbending cavalryman, who always wore gloves.'). They must have found M. Guitton both fascinating and naive. Haig taught him to paint, Elphinstone told him anecdotes about Napoleon on St Helena, Hopetoun he instructed: 'If one told him that something which he had discovered the night before had been said a hundred times already, and was in every syllabus for the French Baccalauréat, he would reply: "Really?" and wasn't in the least put out.'

Most of the 'encounters' are not of course of this extreme kind, experiences under the threat of massacre; and the intensity of M. Guitton's intellectual life is such that he makes the issues involved seem (as indeed they are) infinitely significant. Through the people he meets, he raises those issues which have been the sources of his intellectual pursuit: the relations between history and faith in this account of André Maurois and Paul-Louis Couchoud, of Christian Unity in that of Lord Halifax, of philosophy and theology in that of Fr Auguste Valensin, Bergson and Teilhard de Chardin; literature in that of Claudel and

Charles du Bos. I find his worship of Valensin difficult to understand. This is clearly a case where the personality of the man is superior to that of his writings, since it is difficult to value as much as M. Guitton, say, Valensin's account of Pascal's wager argument, which often verges on the commonplace. In fact Valensin seems to be the exception to the rule M. Guitton enunciates on p. 92: 'nothing is to be gained by seeing again, by reverting to, by hearing once more (even if he is a genius) someone who can only repeat himself, and pick his personality to pieces before one, a personality which is always inferior to his work: for a man's work is finer than himself.'

On literature, in spite of the fact that, like some philosophers, he gives occasionally the appearance of regarding it as an inferior activity ('The questions asked by professors of literature . . . seemed to me to by-pass the question most vital to man: the search for truth.') he has at times very acute comments, like this one on Sartre and Valéry:

'Sartre, like Zola (and Hugo sometimes), uses mass effects without paragraphs, pauses or gaps. They know that mass, block, substance, hides weaknesses. They trust in the future which will be sure to preserve some valuable bits and pieces amidst the rubble. This way of writing is an act of faith in the future. Valéry was the opposite. He made his own museum. In his written work he left only ruins, fragments, truncated images, like the Parthenon frieze in the British Museum: he edited himself.' (p. 135).

He is no less acute in the moral sphere, as one might expect from the author of *L'Amour humain*. The brief and succinct analysis of 'The crisis of love in middle life', sparked off by a reflection on Fromentin's *Dominique*, has the virtue of saying what we all know or feel but of making us understand why we do so: 'This is the age we call that of the noonday devil, the age when David turns towards Bathsheba, the age of masculine passions . . . the age of violent, self-willed aberrations like devastations which are often stronger in proportion as the man had been calm and fulfilled . . . The danger of middle age is that the union brought about by a first attraction and maintained by habit and duty may become an association of one-time lovers, an honourable retirement.'

Or on Montherlant's affinity with his subject in *Port Royal*: 'Aridity, zeal in aridity, love and at the same time self-contempt, a lapidary style, overbearing arguments, something rebellious even when assenting, something harsh even in tenderness. And if I dare say so, more affinity with pride than with greatness of soul, in so far as one can judge them in a stage production.'

There is a flaw in M. Guitton, and it is one he shares with Péguy—a quasi-mystical treatment of the land of France itself, particularly his own region, Creuse, to which twenty-five pages are devoted. There is no maurrassien excess of chauvinism here, no sinister overtones of racialism and reaction; but there is a flavour of that peculiar addiction to French 'gloire' which allows even a mind as acute as M. Guitton's to put Joan of Arc on the same level of discussion as Socrates and Christ: 'Socrates, for that way of considering the whole which we call philosophy; Jesus, for religion seen as love; Joan, for the idea of nation as

contemporary men conceive it—perhaps a conception that will endure, perhaps one that will be valid for only a certain time.’ (p. 218). The canonization of Joan of Arc certainly raises interesting problems for the non-French Catholic, and it is probably as well to be reminded of this; but M. Guitton is in fact interested in another problem here, what he calls the relation between vocation and institution.

The translation is competent but stilted, and verges often on the literal—‘at the time of the first stars’, for instance, instead of ‘when the stars first come out’, and there are a few misprints and non-translations (St Augustine’s disciple sounds curiously gallicised as ‘Julien d’Eclane’). But on the whole it is well done and the book itself is emphatically one to which the reader returns, either for those pages which act as the mirror of the author, or those which serve as a lens for scrutinizing a galaxy of the intellect.

LOUIS ALLEN

WILLIAM TEMPLE: SOME LAMBETH LETTERS 1942-1944, edited by F. E. Temple; Oxford University Press; 30s.

WILLIAM TEMPLE, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: HIS LIFE AND LETTERS, by F. A. Iremonger, abridged edition by D. C. Somervell; Oxford Paperbacks; 7s. 6d.

D. C. Somervell’s abridged edition of Dean Iremonger’s *Life and Letters of William Temple*, together with the new volume *Some Lambeth Letters 1942-1944*, recalls for me some personal memories of this great Archbishop which I think illustrate his character. By his special permission I was confirmed by him before the age of 12. I have no vivid memory of the confirmation itself; but I have never forgotten my surprise in finding myself by his side next morning in a tramcar. He grasped in his hand an enormous highly polished suitcase inscribed ‘William Manchester’. The picture to me was one of magnificent democracy: for in those days one still associated considerable state with a Bishop of the establishment.

The next time that I met him was in Oxford when as Archbishop of York he gave a Mission in the University. The impression of power and integrity of intellect shorn of all emotionalism remains to this day. Perhaps Dr Barry did not exaggerate when he said of this Mission that ‘it stopped the rot in the Christian life of post-war Oxford (1931)’. It was no surprise when William Temple moved to Canterbury: but it was a great shock to all Christian people that his tenure of that high office was so brief. ‘In a short time’, however, ‘he filled a long time’, and left an indelible imprint on the Anglican tradition. The present Archbishop of Canterbury with his wide and spacious mind of scholarship and ecumenism, combined with a fidelity to the essential Christian legacy, represents a continuation of the Temple line.