

able centre of the world, whether man flies from Him or not, whether man recognizes Him as the centre of his life or tries to make for himself another world-centre or a world without a centre at all.

To those who have still ears to hear, Picard's symbolic language will ring more clearly than any other psychological analysis, however profound.

From what has been said one might think that the *Flucht vor Gott* is a severe book which judges and condemns. No doubt decisions of the utmost gravity are at stake. Yet there is much tenderness in the book: that tenderness which helps by sympathy and points out the road to salvation—not to self-obtained salvation, which does not exist, but to that salvation which God gives to them that trust in Him. May we not say that it is the tenderness of an *anima naturaliter christiana*? Even if the name of Christ is not mentioned in the book, we find it everywhere unexpressed and unnamed, as is shown by the beautiful quotation of St. Augustine which serves as the motto of the book.

A. VAN ZWANENDYK.

DAS GEHEIMNIS DER ZEITEN. By Oskar Bauhofer. (Kösel & Pustet, Munich; RM. 3.)

Dr. Bauhofer has here collected and unified a series of lectures which together attempt to present an outline of a Christian interpretation of history, in the tradition of St. Augustine and Bossuet. In method, however, he is nearer to the former, though since he writes primarily as a theologian and not at all, as in part St. Augustine wrote, with the intentions of an apologist, he is even less concerned with the possibilities of empirical investigation, and so presents an appearance of *a priori* reasoning which by itself is likely to appeal only to the already converted. His own declaration, therefore, needs emphasizing, that he is a theologian first and foremost, and a philosopher only secondarily, so that no quarrel can be fixed on him for assuming without comment the divinely revealed truths of Christianity, while the nature of the ultimate ground of history (the providence of God) removes the possibility of any attempt at deducing the rationality and necessity of what must have been, regardless of what has in fact happened. Indeed, the author expressly says that the theory of history must "proceed from the givenness and unity of the object." But if the meaning of history is thus found to be ultimately "ein tiefes Mysterium," we may wonder what line will be taken in pursuing an understanding of it. The thesis is briefly as follows: The status of mankind in history is a status of bondage to death. As fallen from the state of innocence man is in that bondage; even as redeemed by Jesus Christ he is still liable to relapse into

it. But the chief characteristic of the historical process is not that it confers on its participants a status, but precisely that it is a process which is also a progress—towards a goal. For those who seek after the meaning of history no impersonal formula or law of activity displayed in the succession of events ought to suffice. Historical fact, whether isolated or in a body, cannot completely explain itself, and to attempt to find some explanation without going outside of and beyond history can be neither a successful nor a properly metaphysical procedure. For the Christian this meaning is to be found in the struggle against and victory over death, that is to say the Redemption, effected by Jesus Christ and worked out and brought to fruition in his Mystical Body. The Church on earth, though set to work within the limits of history, is not confined to them any more than was her Head during his earthly life. The second part of the book deals with the historical person of Christ and his redemptive work, considering him as the central point of history and the permanent basis which alone gives meaning to the historical flux. Third comes an examination of the two types of Hero and Saint, the former but a shadow of the latter, foreshadowing him indeed, but himself overshadowed by the *umbra mortis*; struggling, though, to realize his potentialities for sanctity—striving towards God. At the close is an inspiring message for a civilization which manifestly feels the weight of years and the nearness of death, whose youth is disgustedly attempting to return by dubious paths to the unattainable state of innocence. “Der Welt, die unter dem Falle steht, *ist immer alt.*” But with the hours of darkness on Calvary, when Christ was old and near to death, old as the sins of mankind and its bondage to death from the opening to the close of history, “das ‘Alte’ ist vergangen: der ‘alte’ Mensch. Eine heilige Jugend bricht auf—Reben vom Weinstock Christi.”

The light of Dr. Bauhofer's thorough knowledge and wise use of Holy Scripture, and the truly philosophic understanding which he shows of many subjects, may tend to be obscured for English readers by the exuberant repetitions and circumlocutions which play so large a part in his explanatory passages. But Das Geheimnis der Zeiten, the book like the fact, is worthy to be pondered.

H. C. THOMAS.

DESIGN FOR TRANSITION. By Joseph Thorpe. (Jonathan Cape; 3/6.)

A small but, in many ways, valuable book, it should be read by those who can only think of politics in terms of slogans, mass movements and appeals for “broad united fronts” against other broad and united fronts. Mr. Thorpe points out persuasively and with reason that the solution of many of the social problems