

harnessing of the forces of nature. The rational procedure of philosophy, on the other hand, flouts experimental tests of verification and produces in effect a host of irreconcilable and seemingly sterile generalities. Still, philosophize we must; otherwise we have but a truncated vision of reality. Science replaces global natural perspectives with analysis and precision: it measures analytically the constant relationships among physical phenomena. But such an artificial breaking-down can tell only part of the story. The real is impregnated with a meaning that surpasses the scope of mathematical measurement, and it is the task of meta-physics to gauge the nature and import of that meaning.

Whitehead's philosophy of physics was orientated in that direction. His criticism of the bifurcation theory of nature which admitted only primary qualities as real attributes of matter, his rejection of the classical conception of matter in simple location, his own philosophy of organism seen as a theory of continuous succession, all illustrate the tendency of his mind towards a synthetic philosophic comprehension of the universe. In his own field of speciality and within the general context of his whole philosophy, a synthesis of that kind may be possible. But when it comes to the more remote problem of origins, special difficulties arise. That is particularly so regarding living matter. Biochemical analysis has reduced to such an extent the number of properties characteristic of organic matter, that the dividing line between living and non-living is no longer distinguishable. In which case any scientific theory on the nature and origin of life becomes a challenge to the scientist-philosopher.

NICHOLAS FOLAN, O.P.

ATOMIC RADIATION AND LIFE. By Peter Alexander. (Penguin Books; 3s. 6d.)

This is a full account of our present knowledge about the biological effects of radiation, whether direct or by genetic inheritance. In this rapidly expanding subject it is essential that any popular account should come from an expert actually working in the field; only he can hope to assess the evidence and enter the necessary *caveats*. Dr Alexander has produced an authoritative book which can be recommended to everyone, and which must be read by those who are prepared to make moral decisions in matters relating to the subject.

L.B.

GÉOGRAPHIE DE LA TERRE SAINTE. By M. du Buit, O.P. (Cerf; 1,200 fr.)

The work of Père Abel, *Géographie de la Palestine*, I and II, still remains the best synthesis on the Holy Land as background and cradle of our Scriptures. Our present author makes this point, and has

himself sought to write a briefer and more accessible supplement¹ to the *Bible de Jérusalem*. In the first part he has succeeded admirably, beginning with a description of the physical features, the main contours, climate, geology, vegetation, and the demographical characteristics of steppe-land, mountain and desert, finally a descriptive survey of Palestine region by region ('Les Cantons de la Palestine'). We then pass on to historical geography and open with a valuable note on the identification of sites, showing how we must combine historical and documentary and traditional and archaeological evidences to determine with ever varying degrees of certainty, the various sites of Old and New Testament times. It is in this, and other, aspects of 'Palestinology' that the École Biblique at Jerusalem has eminently distinguished itself, and always led the way.

A seemingly prosaic title—'Les Chemins'—heads a fascinating chapter on ways and crossways. This examination of the routes taken by the People of God from the migration of Patriarchs to the Machabean campaigns furnishes us with a vivid light on text after text. Than which we can hardly ask more of any ancillary or introductory writing on the Bible.

Boundaries and divisions of the Hebrew tribes, and then of the alien folk, Canaanites, Phoenicians, Moabites, etc., are followed by geographical aspects of the Kingdom, before and after the Schism. Finally comes a consideration of Judaea in the Persian, Macedonian and Roman Empires. This last seems over-condensed. As we draw nearer the 'fullness of the times', we should like a proportionately fuller treatment of this background, geographical and political, of the New Testament.

The last element is an 'Index onomastique', which furnishes terse notes on each place-name, and provides an index to the whole volume as well as valuable references to texts.

The second volume, or Part II, consists of a sheaf of eighteen folded sheets of line and black and white maps, designed to illustrate the text of Volume I. This it no doubt does, though perhaps in a bookish way, and we may feel dissatisfied. Black and white line maps, and the cleverest typographical *sigla*, can never convey adequately the stark contrasts of light and shade, of rocks and steppe-land, of parched and watered places, and above all of the intensity of light—eight times that of our northern climes. Something of the reality can partly be conveyed

¹ This book, indeed, is the third to appear in a series of *Études Annexes* to the Jerusalem Bible. Meantime this Bible, or rather a part of it, has now been published in yet another format, namely *Le Nouveau Testament* (Editions du Cerf, various prices from 1,200 fr.) in a pocket edition. This reprints the New Testament as it is found—with notes, introductions and marginal references—in the one-volume edition, but in larger type. It should also be noted that the original, paper-back, separate volumes of this Bible are now appearing in a second, revised edition.

by coloured film-strips, as also by many photos to supplement maps as in Fr Grollenberg's *Atlas of the Bible*. Such helps are a *sine qua non* of those who would study the Palestinian stage and background seriously. In the present instance a few well-designed contour maps and a few coloured diagrams or illustrations, or again a few pages in the style of the *Westminster Historical Atlas*, would have far better served the purposes both of the book itself and of the *Bible de Jérusalem*.

ROLAND POTTER, O.P.

MY SUNDAY READING. By Kevin O'Sullivan, O.F.M. (Bruce; \$5.)

This book is sub-titled 'A Popular Explanation and Application of the Sunday Epistles and Gospels', and in the Preface Father O'Sullivan reminds us that the obligation to keep the Sabbath holy is an injunction not only to attend religious services, but to set the day apart as a time which can be spent peacefully restoring our awareness of God which is sure to have been blunted by the rush of life on other days. Despite opinions to the contrary this needs saying, and saying carefully, as Father O'Sullivan does. There is no suggestion that we should go to the lengths of reading nothing but the Bible, refusing to pick up even a duster, and wearing black. It is not what we turn from but what we turn to on Sundays that counts, and here we are offered something we can turn to without making the day penitential. Father O'Sullivan takes the Epistle and Gospel of the day and gives a homiletic exposition of it sentence by sentence. He gives us the context and historical background, unravels complications in the text and explains obscurities. That is the Explanation. It is followed by an Application rather in the fashion of the See-Judge-Act method of Y.C.W. Each Sunday of the year is allotted five or six pages, hardly enough reading matter to paralyse all other activity for the day, but enough to colour it and even to orientate the rest of the week. It is an admirable piece of work, pithy and strong. 'If you ever feel that your trust in God seems to need an uplift, read the story of Abraham in Genesis'—'It may be the sixth or the ninth or even the eleventh hour of my life, yet I can still earn heaven if I listen to the call today'. He can hit us between the eyes or slap us on the back equally vigorously. This is a first-rate book for meditation for layfolk and priests, and if any of the clergy think of using it for sermon-fodder they will probably find it of more use than other men's sermon notes. Besides this one hardly notices how learned it is.

GERARD MEATH, O.P.

ATLAS OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN WORLD. By F. Van der Meer and Christine Mohrmann. (Nelson; 70s.)

This is the successor volume to Father Grollenberg's admirable *Atlas of the Bible* and in consequence has been eagerly expected. Both editors