

should be placed on the creative action of the mind in understanding—its making of the object intelligible.

Lest it should be thought that the contributors to the symposium are rationalists of the deepest dye, attention should be paid to R. J. McCaul's paper on 'Truth and Propaganda,' with its plea for the development of the practically-practical sciences in a living context involving social prudence, and J. W. Stafford's paper on 'The Psychology of Bias and Prejudice.' This paper treats of questions too long ignored by Catholic writers, and some of the so-called traditional conflicts within the scholastic fold might well be re-examined in the light of knowledge concerning stereotypes built up upon prejudiced judgments or of the pathological major premise involved in pre-existing attitudes. Why, for instance, do Dominicans and Jesuits fall so neatly into opposing camps on certain questions?

Throughout the whole symposium there is a real current of philosophic wonder, and the desire to relate their principles to the flux of the hour is everywhere evident. The American Catholic Philosophers are no mere theorists *bombinantes in vacuo* in an abstract world of their own invention, but as true metaphysicians they are not afraid of diving down into the real.

Might we suggest, however, that more careful treatment should have been given to what St. Thomas calls knowledge by connaturality, and that certain obscurities might have been avoided if more explicit attention had been paid to St. Thomas' first question in the *De Veritate*?

IAN HISLOP, O.P.

**THE FREE WILL CONTROVERSY.** By M. Davidson, D.Sc., F.R.A.S.  
(Watts; 7s. 6d.)

This book purports to give an outline history of the teaching of the outstanding theological and philosophical systems of western civilisation on the question of the freedom of the will. The first chapter, 'Babylonian Astrology,' and the last two, 'The Problem in the Light of Recent Development in Physics' betray the sure touch of an expert dealing with his own subject. The rest of the book describes the teaching of Jewish and Christian theology and of the philosophies of Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz, Hume, Kant, Mill and Haeckel on the same question.

Writing of Prof. Ernst Haeckel, Dr. Davidson expresses his opinion that this great philosopher 'would have been well advised if it had been suggested that his writings should have been confined to the realm of Biology. When he has made incursions into other departments he has sometimes betrayed an arrogant spirit and a lack of good taste, and some of his critics have been equally unfortunate in their examination of his views.' Lest I be judged 'equally unfortunate' in proffering his own advice to Dr. Davidson, let me acknowledge that the learned author, though like to

Haeckel in his authority as a biologist, does not descend to such sweeping generalisations or such infuriating misrepresentations as those he quotes from Haeckel. Besides he is not so arrogant. With the modern philosophers—and the brief sketching of their views is made valuable by quotations from their own works—he is certainly not arrogant. It is true that he often disagrees without much show of reasoning and confidently condemns philosophical theories, such as Hume's view of Causality, by arbitrary reference to the infallible decess of Modern Science, but it is done gently, and without arrogance. The earlier philosophers (perhaps because their knowledge of Modern Science was less) get shorter shrift, but it is with the Theologians, when they dare to express any view on this question, that Dr. Davidson's patience is strained. Thus, without any discussion or justification, he writes of St. Thomas' contribution to the question that 'it cannot be said that these points and the arguments which are based upon them are really satisfactory.' That is all. But even with theologians, despite their 'tedious and profitless controversies,' he tries not to be arrogant. Chapter IV. ends with a pitiful appeal 'to readers to be a little sympathetic to the theologian in the difficulties which confront him, more especially in modern times'—'more especially in modern times' because 'it is now impossible to hope that Revelation—a favourite armour of the past—will afford any protection in the future.' Besides, the theologian has to start, apparently, by accepting as axiomatic every unsubstantiated attack of the Rationalists. He must admit that unquestionably the biblical account of the Fall is 'legendary' and 'devoid of historical bases,' that the Hebrews were indebted to the Babylonians for their religious beliefs and that the Code of Hammurabi was the basis of the theocratic legislation. Besides, the modern theologian would be unreasonable to doubt that St. Paul taught rigid predestinationism, held that 'the Commandments were given to be broken as much as possible,' was a fanatical misogynist and (for all that) the virtual founder of Christianity. Accordingly, the only theological writings found worthy of detailed criticism are those of Anglican divines who do seem to accept the position thrust upon them by the Rationalists, and the self-contradictions of these gentlemen are ruthlessly exposed. Catholics gave better in so far as 'most readers will agree that the Roman Catholic view contains more truth than the Anglican'—why then not discover what Catholics teach as theologians (the travesty of the Augustinian controversy cannot have been derived from Catholic sources) and as Philosophers? Surely the Scholastic arguments from the universal ethical notions, from conscience and remorse, and the metaphysical argument are worth at least a mention in a book on the history of the Free Will Controversy. But Dr. Davidson does not look for a solution in so philosophical a direction. He would have us await the fruit of biological research. In the meantime, while the best scientists admit with

Einstein that, in their scientific capacity, they 'cannot understand what people mean when they talk about freedom of the human will,' we must possess our souls in scepticism.

L.D.F.

37 THE BROAD. THE MEMOIRS OF AN OXFORD DOCTOR. By H. E. Counsell. (Robert Hale, 12s. 6d.)

The sub-title of this lively book might suggest a narrow setting and a limited appeal. However the would-be-reader may rest assured that he will spend quite as much of his time out of Oxford as in it, for Dr. Counsell has travelled far and wide, both professionally and privately. Similarly the reader will be told much besides the author's professional experiences—for instance, of the origins and early history of the O.U.D.S., or how a train was stolen during the last war. He must in fact be prepared for entertaining variety. He will certainly appreciate the dozen or so of excellent photographs which intersperse the leaves of this very readable autobiographical sketch. Viscount Nuffield has contributed a foreword.

A. L'E.

A STUDENT'S VIEW OF THE UNIVERSITIES. By Brian Simon. (Longmans; n.p.)

The view is the one frequently presented to Catholic students at the Universities and one they have constantly to beware of, for it is deceptive. The importance of the University is recognised and spoken of in much the same tone as in the present number of BLACKFRIARS. But a closer investigation of this student's idea of a university will be found to be rather unhistorical, rather attracted to Russia, rather irreligious and, finally, somewhat pragmatic.

## BLACKFRIARS

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