

BLACKFRIARS

reflexive agreement among men illuminated by revelation as to the norms of conduct. The result is 'extreme individualism in views, and no accepted rules or opinions as to the limitations of the literary job.' Hence the number of transient messiahs in modern literature, hence the frequent absence of any moral or social sense in the characters of modern fiction. The author traces this loss of tradition and orthodoxy in English writers to the decay of Protestant Christianity and he remarks that the disappearance of the idea of Original Sin, of intense moral struggle, is making the human beings in poetry and fiction 'less and less real.' Writers in our time tend to impose on their readers their own *personal view of life* and to exploit their *personality* in their art. This fact is the key to Mr. Eliot's thesis. In other times the Devil chose blasphemy as his mode of operation, but blasphemy has become obsolete with belief. It is Mr. Eliot's conviction that the Evil Spirit has chosen in our time the undisciplined *personality* of men of genius — and he analyses certain cases — as the instruments for his diabolical expression, the sensitiveness of the instrument making it the fitter medium. We are convinced by his argument, but disagree with his examples.

It is clear that this is not a book to please or even interest the ordinary literary critic. He has no time for such things as damnation. But for those sincerely anxious for the fate of literature these lectures are of great importance. The disintegration of belief and of the way of life that comes to be established through belief, in the long run paralyzes literature and at the same time makes the artist a Satanic influence. Mr. Eliot leaves the method of re-establishing a tradition unsettled; he seems inclined to think it can be consciously imposed. That is not hopeful. It must be re-established as it originated — through personal belief and transformation. When society is *vitally* Christian again a *vital* tradition will form itself naturally. That will not be in our time. But we can begin.

A.M.

NEW **PSYCHOLOGY AND OLD RELIGION.** By Edward F. Murphy, S.S.J., Ph.D. (Washbourne & Bogan, 1934; pp. xiii, 265; 6/-.)

The conflict between the law of the mind and that of the members, between the *good* that one wills and the evil that one does, is old, very old. St. Paul knew and spoke of it: 'Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God by Jesus Christ our Lord.' If the conflict is old, the psychology which is trying in its way to deal with it is relatively new. That it is largely agnostic or even

REVIEWS

materialist is indeed true, and in so far as it **is**, this is its great defect, since it has invaded a sphere in which sound ethics and the spiritual values of religion are required. Father Murphy is at pains to expound the Pauline solution, for such **is** the main thesis of this book. The intention is good, and there is much wisdom in its pages.

We are far from believing that psychology can give the complete answer, or clear up all conflicts, but that it can help, and often more effectively than 'religion,' cannot be denied, though we cannot stay to show why, except that 'religion' has so little meaning now, for those who turn principally to psychology for enlightenment. Were the author more accurate in his presentation of the claims of psychology, the book would have gained in value. The new psychology is not adequately represented by that **school** which Fr. Murphy mainly attacks, namely the radical behaviourism of Professor Watson. Had he brought in Freud, and others of that way of thinking, he could have made out a better case.

What is urgently needed to-day is co-operation between psychology and religion, for each in its field has something to offer, each can give assistance to souls tormented in ways they cannot always of themselves prevent. Just as we may turn to medicine for physical remedies, so too we may turn to psychology for spiritual remedies in the natural order, and, thus by removing obstacles open the way for grace.

G.A.E.

PRACTICAL PSYCHOLOGY. By Rudolf Allers, adapted by Vera Barclay. (Sheed & Ward; 4/6.)

Dr. Strauss' translation of Rudolf Allers' *Psychology of Character* first appeared about three years ago. To the casual reader it appeared to be just another technical book on experimental psychology. Its language bears traces at least of the jargon which we associate with scientific treatises: there are places where a technical term that is intelligible to the Greek scholar defrauds the ordinary reader of the meaning of a whole passage. There are small defects in the arrangement, and there are times when one wishes that the translator had taken greater liberties with the original. The book owes its undoubted success to its intrinsic worth, to its saneness and its searching analysis of motives, rather than to any superficial attractiveness of style or language.

What Miss Barclay modestly calls 'an abridged and re-arranged version' is little short of a complete metamorphosis. Except that they are shorn of technicalities, the words are Dr.