

human persons, traces all events in 'so-called nature' to the direct will of God. Consequently the existence of physical evil in the world becomes a major problem for personalists.

Three attempted solutions to the problem of evil are then examined. These solutions of Bowne, Knudson, and Brightman are rejected by the author as inadequate, and he concludes by expressing a lamentably vague hope that a satisfactory answer is to be found in the future and not in the past.

Brightman's view receives fuller treatment than the others. He postulates in God the existence of the 'given.' This 'given' is a limiting and retarding factor in God: it is not of God's creation, yet God has to struggle with it eternally, and since it is present within the Deity, God can achieve His ends only under difficulties and not without delay and suffering. The 'given' is therefore the cause of all physical evil.

This reckless and appalling solution calls for little comment, and it is to be hoped that few personalists will accept it. N.M.

WRITERS IN FREEDOM. A Symposium based on the Seventeenth International Congress of the P.E.N. Club. Edited by Herman Ould. (Hutchinson; 8s. 6d.)

To a Christian, accepting the 'primacy of the spiritual,' this is a depressing book, and for the same reasons which make it depressing to anyone concerned with the serious discussion of literature. That so many and so diverse writers should differ is natural; but when they are agreed about nothing except that in some way 'literature matters,' it is difficult to see how those conditions which favour great writing are to be obtained: it is not good for man to be alone; and the writer is not less in need of the community than other men.

The temperature of the book is indicated by Mr. E. M. Forster: 'I think that there are only two forms of order in the universe: with the first we are not concerned, though I will mention it in passing—it is the Divine order, the mystic vision for those who can gain it We are concerned with the second order, that which an artist can create in his own work. . . .' The divine is mentioned only in passing: one immediately understands that essentially materialist concern with propaganda which has so large a place in this symposium, and which Mr. Stephen Spender has criticised so effectively in his recent *Life and the Poet*. In so far as any general critical tendency is discernible, it is towards a view of the poet as no longer the unacknowledged but the accepted legislator of the world; and from this one turns with relief to the contribution of Mr. Olaf Stapledon: 'Literature must have its roots in concrete living, in minute particular experiences . . . It should, of course, clarify not only understanding, but also, and more particularly, feeling.'

L.T.