

or even in a series of essays it would have been legitimate to ask, just where does the Catholic Church come into the picture? One cannot help regretting that more of its supernatural force is not indicated in these non-committal—perhaps ‘irresponsible’ is less than just to the real author—letters. Michael Paravane, the Catholic, is a very elusive figure and typical—if at all—of a very small group; on p. 69 Peter catches a glimpse of the limitations of merely natural reasoning and in the style there is an echo of Belloc, but it is only an echo and the original thunder is harmlessly distant. Surely, if those of us who were born into the age of security are at a loss to understand younger lives jerked from crisis to crisis—the Russian Revolution, the Wall Street Crash, Hitler, and the atom bomb—we may be allowed to cultivate our garden: but in the spirit of St Benedict, not of Candide.

EDWARD QUINN.

PHYSICS AND EXPERIENCE. By Bertrand Russell. (Henry Sidgwick lecture; Cambridge, 1946; 1s. 6d.)

Lord Russell's opening paragraph might lead one to hope that he intended to deal with the metaphysical presuppositions of the inductive method used by physical science. But he proceeds to state his problem somewhat as follows. External objects, if it be assumed that metaphysics is essentially correct in its account of them, are very unlike what we perceive. But physics is built on inferences from perception. How can we account for the discrepancy? Russell then discusses perception and the relation of mind to matter, with his usual combination of logical acumen and neglect of metaphysics.

He takes for granted the truths of physics and does not discuss their origin. To resolve his problem it would seem essential, however, to consider first the method of physics, and the kind of knowledge to be expected from such a method. Since the method is quantitative, based on measurement, it can only issue in a mathematical account of nature; it is therefore not surprising that colours, scents and sounds (for example) are omitted. Incidentally the method cannot proceed unless we have independent grounds for believing its basic assumption, namely that there is order in nature; and such grounds can only be metaphysical.

E.F.C.

PUZZLED PEOPLE. By Mass-Observation. (Gollancz; 7s. 6d.)

‘A study in popular attitudes to religion, ethics, progress and politics’, or, more briefly, ‘Well, I don't know’—the representative answer to Mass-Observation's enquiries in a London suburb. The Ethical Union, which sponsored the enquiries, concludes that ‘the principles of Christianity and the principles of liberal rationalism have failed to save the masses from desultory living’, and hopes that ‘transforming the conditions of life and thought . . . by wise and