

a sense of urgency, but neither minimises the problem which faces our generation. Mr Curtis summarises his now well-known views on the necessity of union between states sharing a common outlook and a similar political structure: it is the first approach to an international state, all that is possible at the present stage, but the least that can be done to hold off the atomic threat until the nations have accepted their responsibility to the wider community of mankind. Mr Mumford vividly describes the situation to which the atomic bomb has brought us and the burden of guilt which its use has placed upon the English-speaking nations. But he recognises the impossibility of a one-sided repudiation of atomic warfare and in his simple appeal in the name of United States citizens emphasises the need of a 'complete system of United Nations' inspection and control of atomic weapons and atomic energy'. Religion, he thinks, should be 'mobilised' for the temporal salvation of the world; even if it does not stand up to rational examination, it still has the power to curb man's irrational tendency to self-destruction. One cannot help feeling that at this point Mr Mumford's sense of the desperate character of the situation has made him overlook the futility of such an instrument. Neither the theory of dialectical materialism which Mr Ribnikar would like to see accepted as the orthodox doctrine of the United Nations nor the practice of big business will submit to such an ill-founded discipline. The truth penetrates more slowly, though it may still avert the worst disasters if only it can begin to mean more than it does at present to those who possess it and if it can be served in their different ways by these two men of good will and powerful insight.

E.Q.

WRITERS OF TODAY. Edited by Denys Val Baker. (Sidgwick & Jackson; 8s. 6d.)

THE NEW SPIRIT. Edited by E. W. Martin. (Dennis Dobson; 8s. 6d.)

Although at first sight these books appear to be complementary, further scrutiny proves that they are similar merely in so far as they are both comprised of a number of short literary studies. After that resemblance ceases, for whereas Mr Baker is out to avoid general articles on 'movements', and to present in their place examinations of individual modern authors, Mr Martin works to a plan, the aim of which is 'to illustrate the direction in which culture is moving'—a task he has set about by including essays upon such men as Tolstoy, Andreyev and Strindberg, as well as on the late Llewelyn Powys and the contemporary American novelist, William Faulkner. In this regard, his collection is the more interesting; in the other anthology there is a tendency to choose 'leading' rather than important writers, which accounts, no doubt, for the inclusion of Priestley and Dorothy Sayers, although, it should be added, their respective critics, Jack Lindsay and Fr Paul Foster, throw out many stimulating asides in the course of their surveys. Apart from the contributions already mentioned, the level of the essays is disappointing when measured

by the canons of true literary criticism, even if they would be distinctive when judged by sixth-form criteria. The lack of real analysis leaves an impression, after reading several such pieces, of having waded through interminable bibliographies. There is, however, one more exception to this stricture—D. S. Savage—who provides two expositions: one of the work of Margiad Evans, the other of that of E. M. Forster. It is the latter essay which deserves separate comment.

His thesis is that certain writers—the majority usually—allow their themes to take shape from the exteriorization of an inner conflict rather than to proceed from an achieved centre of being. The difference is well exemplified in a contrast between the novels of François Mauriac and those of Forster. Whilst the former's plots are increasing in scope—compare his *Le Baiser au Lépreux* (1923) with *La Pharisienne* (1943)—the latter reached a height of excellence early in his career from which he has not been able to develop. His creative efforts stopped in 1924 with *A Passage to India*, because he had, in fact, written himself out. The actions of his characters were conceived in a state antecedent to full integration, so that as soon as the different subject matters which had accrued through his personal logic were exhausted, silence set in. His friend, G. Lowes Dickinson, once declared that his object as a novelist was 'to bring realistic life into contact with the background of value (or whatever it is)'. Unfortunately after a time value without faith becomes meaningless. It cannot be solved by subtraction, but only as an equation.

Here is the gist of Savage's thought. Its execution, if carried through successfully, may be a major step in English criticism.

NEVILLE BRAYBROOKE

THE CONSECRATION OF GENIUS. By Robert Sencourt. (Hollis & Carter; 21s.)

It is often a disappointment when picking up a book on Christian art, to discover that the making of the book itself, its binding and its printing, have not been informed by that concern for right making which is so rigorously recommended in the text of the work. No such sense of discord awaits the reader of this book, for the dust-cover is striking, the print is pleasant to the eye, and the superb illustrations are testimony to the skill of the publishers, and to the fine discrimination of the author's taste. The delight awakened in the reader by the appearance of the volume increases in following Mr Sencourt's demonstration of how the sense of the divine has ennobled works of art from the time of the Song of Songs until the time of Bossuet. Each of the chapters—and they are catholic in their wide range—is devoted to some particular genius, Plotinus, Bunyan and Palestrina being only three of the names which will attract experts on each individual subject, and will enable them to find fresh riches in these old quarries. Specially valuable is the insistence in the chapter on the Gothic Cathedral that much paganism still lurked in gargoyles of