

present at the subsequent discussion. One supposes that some of the Society suggested revisions of the theory in the light of St Thomas's statement that it is neither the intellect nor the senses which know, but man by means of both. Since Fr Ekbery ends with a quotation from the *De Veritate* to show that 'every act of judgment essentially implies some reflexion' it is to be hoped that someone was able to continue with the rest of the quotation from Q.T., Art. IX, since the whole article is illuminating. Lastly, it is to be hoped that someone came away from the meeting resolved to translate the *De Veritate*, because an edition of the *De Veritate* with a commentary showing its bearing upon contemporary thought would be a great blessing.

D. NICHOLL.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF SIR ARTHUR EDDINGTON. By A. D. Ritchie. (Cambridge; 2s.)

In the first Eddington Memorial Lecture, Professor Ritchie wisely leaves aside the question associated with Eddington's later work, that of *a priori* knowledge in physics, and touches rather discursively on some philosophical problems suggested by Eddington's general approach to the theory of physical science. He has much that is of interest to say about 'subjective' and 'objective', about mathematics, and about the differences between the laws of microscopic, man-sized, and cosmic phenomena; his learning is lightly worn, and a number of respected fallacies collapse at his touch. Perhaps the most interesting reflections occur in the final summary; of Eddington's Kantian or near-Kantian assumptions he writes: 'Truth is true because it conforms to reality, but knowledge is not passive recience and its conformity to reality is not to be discovered by inspection from without, since there is no "without" to inspect from'; and, speaking of Eddington's speculations about the number of particles in the universe, 'Whether you wish it or not, speculations of this kind cannot be avoided if there is to be synoptic physical theory, and that means if there is to be no respectable theory at all, not just scraps'. Though inconclusive, this is a stimulating and helpful essay.

E. F. CALDIN.

THE APOCALYPSE OF HISTORY. By E. Lampert. (Faber and Faber; 18s.)

Since Dr Lampert makes a boast of desiring no 'clarity' (p. 27), it is no wonder that his book is not easy to review. Pascal, he reminds us, made a similar boast, *qu'on ne nous reproche pas la manque de clarté, car nous en faisons profession*; but Pascal after all was a French Catholic trained from infancy in the Western doctrine of the supernatural. Before accepting the parallel between his thought and Dr Lampert's one needs to be sure that the two mean the same

by the term 'mystery'. Dr Lampert is inclined to exaggerate. This is one example from many of an intemperateness of statement, amounting sometimes to browbeating, against which his readers should be on their guard.

This book falls into two main parts, with some supplementary chapters. The first fifty pages—perhaps the best in the book—aim at discerning in time, not apart from it, the 'end' of time and therefore the meaning of time. Rejecting Idealism, which depreciates time, and Futurism which knows of nothing else, Dr Lampert sees time fulfilled in Christ in whom 'time acquires a meaning and becomes History'. 'For History is time which has acquired meaning within itself through having transcended itself' in the God-Man in whom 'the real subjects of History, God and Man, stand revealed'.

The second main part, covering the chapters on Theodicy and Providence, is concerned mostly with problems of free-will and evil. Here Dr Lampert's enemy is rational theology, whether Augustinian or Thomist, which 'divests man of his freedom by denying the reciprocal character of his relation to God'. This 'determinism' is the fatal result of an illusory 'abstract' and 'objective' conception of the Godhead and the reduction of creation to causality. Interpreting the Universe in terms of causality Western theology has ended in a thinly disguised monism. For Dr Lampert however God's act of creation is 'conditioned' by man's freedom; the creativity (i.e., freedom) of man is in fact the proper term of that act. The effect (to use a term which Dr Lampert detests in this connection) of creation is not merely something made 'of nothing', but also something which acts in virtue of nothing but itself. Here, indeed, God's love is displayed, the fulness of his creative generosity. Dante loved to think of free-will as the gift *par excellence* of God to the creature. Dr Lampert more boldly virtually deifies the free creature whose freedom is, he says, 'as it were creation itself, the original divine-human act of creativity'.

One cannot explore these depths in a review. But if Thomists read Dr Lampert with the patience which his frequent discourtesies might well forfeit, they will, I think, admit that he has glimpsed a profound truth, namely, that the causal act *par excellence*, and that which most befits God, is precisely the creation of the maximum likeness to God, the creature that acts of itself though it does not exist of itself. But since we hold that existence, *esse*, is the ultimate actuality, even the creature's 'self-acting', its free action, is, we affirm, also mysteriously an effect of God. To maintain, as we must, the full force of the term 'creation' is to deny the identity of the creature's free action with creativity proper which implies 'aseity'. If Dr Lampert maintains that the effect of creation is precisely creaturely creativity, he can do so because his mind rejects the government of 'objective' concepts, of intelligible necessities. Since we cannot do this we reject his theology as an intolerable confusion.

Yet Dr Lampert seems to score; for freedom is more *obviously* upheld by his theology than by ours. How easy it is to deride our effort to be persistently rational even in theology! To represent our metaphysics as an impertinent human word-spinning which, claiming 'to meet all the difficulties', is so blinded by 'abstractions' as to lose sight of the very factors of the problem it attempts to solve! Thomists produce bogus 'explanations'; Dr Lampert bows reverently before mysteries. This contrast is implied all through his book. Always it is Dr Lampert who acknowledges mystery, who respects the inexplicable, who is un-complacent, innocent, intuitive, so unlike the 'parsons and people who use phrases without wisdom'. He claims a good deal of credit by contrast. What is less tolerable perhaps is his habit of giving bad names to positions before disproving or even discussing them. His intellectual manners are in fact deplorable, and his gibes at reason and the abstractive process—that much-maligned necessity—become rather tedious.

And after all one may ask whether Dr Lampert respects the mysteries as well as the rational theology he discredits. If, for instance, the mysteriousness of the Incarnation consists in this that in considering it we have to conjoin factors which the mind sees as naturally separate, then the mysteriousness itself connotes a seeing; and the more clearly the mind sees what it naturally can see, the more aware it must become of the mystery. We are aware of a tension between apparent incompatibles, whether the divine and human natures or divine causation and human freedom. Our sense of a 'mystery' in each case is not lessened by the work of the abstractive reason; it is rather increased, or should be. Our difficulties are not, perhaps, ultimately lessened; but at least we do not surrender the absolute transcendence of God. Indeed, as Dr Lampert is glad to point out, abstractive reason upholds that absoluteness which he dismisses as 'impersonal' and, therefore, illusory. He takes an easier way; but one not necessarily truer or even more religious.

KENELM FOSTER, O.P.

#### HISTORY

SONG OF A FALLING WORLD. By Jack Lindsay. (Andrew Dakers; 18s.)

In the decline of the Roman Empire, 'the one example we have in the full light of history of the collapse of a civilisation', the author sees a unique opportunity to study what happened to culture and to work out the subtle relation between the social sphere (politico-economic) and the cultural. He sets himself to discover whether it is not possible to do in the case of literature what in recent years others have done in the case of law and of art, and show that it should be judged in relation to the future and not the past. Judged by the standard of the preceding classical age it clearly shows decline, but judged by the standard of the succeeding age it is the first stage of the medieval. While the *Imperium Romanum* was breaking up, poetry was adventuring into new areas of life and experience.