

natural object (bird or twin) and *kwoth*: the predication of *kwoth* always involves a third term not mentioned but understood (cf. p. 142). Professor Evans-Pritchard nowhere mentions any adjectival derivative of *kwoth*, to mean something like 'spiritual' or 'divine'. Some of the difficulty in understanding how a crocodile, for instance, can be called *kwoth* would be removed if '*kwoth*' included an adjectival sense. We too can call things 'divine' without meaning that they share the divine nature: we mean that they serve as sign of the divine, as occasion in and through which we may ascend to contact with 'the divine'—God *actively* transcendent (not merely a third term of more or less the same kind as subject and natural object, and 'behind' them) and thus only to be apprehended by an active transcendence of the occasion in which subject and object concur.

Enough has perhaps been said to show that the study of primitive religion, when it is carried out with the seriousness and restraint which characterize Professor Evans-Pritchard's writings, has the closest relevance to our own deepest religious needs and to our thought about them. Studies of this kind will have to play their part in any theological revival which we may be fortunate enough to see.

REVIEWS

METAPHYSICAL BELIEFS. By S. E. Toulmin, R. W. Hepburn and A. C. MacIntyre. (S.C.M. Press; 25s.)

In his preface to these three essays, Mr MacIntyre says that they are concerned with issues traditionally coming under the heading of 'natural theology'. Since the writers succeed in making this rather vague term more precise, one can assess the measure of agreement between their understanding of it and that given it in the tradition claiming descent from St Thomas.

Professor Toulmin examines two unwarranted extensions of valid scientific theory. The second law of thermodynamics cannot be used to justify statements about the beginning or end of the universe, and the theory of evolution cannot be used as a foundation for ethics. Ethics is founded on reason, though not on the reasoning proper to natural science, whereas the beginning and end of the universe is beyond the power of natural reason to discuss. In the one case a wrong method has been eliminated from natural theology, in the other a whole area delimited as beyond its competence. A Thomist will be in full agreement with this.

The other two essays are less easy to place. They are concerned with

the justification of revealed religion, but it is not always clear whether this is being seen from outside or within, possibly because no attempt is made to discuss that new mind of faith which produces a community who share belief. In modern apologetics religion is viewed from the outside, but it is difficult to say where St Thomas would have found a place for it: doubtless it is a legitimate development of his thought where it is not merely trivial. Unfortunately his own natural theology, centred round the 'ways to God', is not seriously considered in these essays, partly because of the false supposition that it was somehow used to justify revelation, partly because of wrong formulations. Mr MacIntyre is right to point out that 'our concept of existence is inexorably linked to our talk about spatio-temporal objects'. But without considering the Thomist argument to show the truth of the proposition 'there is that which transcends all objects', he only discusses the attempt to present God as a hypothesis explaining certain features of the world. This argument from design belongs to a spurious tradition, and was properly rejected by Hume: but the notion that God does 'reveal' himself to any man able to reason is after all in scripture ('He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not'—John i, 10), and is prior to the fuller revelation through the prophets ('he came into his own . . .') or through the Word. If such reasoning can do nothing to justify faith, it may make it easier to assess the rôle of reason within faith, which is the main concern of these essays.

Both authors have a real and important task. It is to examine the statements of scripture, see how their meaning is derived, how it relates to historical fact, how it can be called true. The coherence of scripture, of which there has been striking demonstration in the recent work of men such as Farrer and Dodd (a Catholic would also draw attention to the great *Bible de Jérusalem*) is of course no guarantee of its truth: where can such guarantee be found? Mr Hepburn makes a valuable comparison with the meaning conveyed by poetry, which in its violations of ordinary language raises problems suggestively similar, though in the end the appeal to this analogy is shown to be insufficient. Mr MacIntyre examines the language of religion directly, and concludes that the only ground for acceptance is the authority of God. In each case the conclusion matters less than the things which emerge *en route*: for these I can only commend the essays themselves to the reader. A possible line of future work suggests itself: the study, within faith, of the relation of the word of God to its later 'prose formulation' as doctrine. That might well be tackled in this excellent series.

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