

or Stevenage the leasehold curse of South Wales or North Oxford. And it has become a social crime to sell a new house even to a family entitled to its allocation on every ground of priority.

It is this curious contrast between growing public understanding of the need for stability at the level of the community and growing incomprehension at the level of the family which makes a textbook of this kind, on the Catholic view of property, particularly welcome. For *Propriété et Communautés*, while dealing with both these levels, is rightly concerned mainly with the second. Roughly half the book consists of studies of the nature of property and of its relation to theology and to moral and social philosophy. The rest is made up, except for one final and superfluous chapter on a Croat version of Owen's parallelograms of paupers, mainly of studies of property as it has appeared in history. There is one chapter on the local parish community as the first link binding the stabilised family to higher political and social organs. The treatment is penetrating, complete and well-balanced, and refreshingly free from the once (though, thank heaven, no longer) familiar back-to-the-land verbiage of distributism. And the authors may be forgiven an occasional misguided *obiter dictum* on the history of capitalism of the kind more usually associated with that heroic warrior of Stalinism on the statistical front, Jurgen Kuczynski.

This is a thoroughly sound and careful text, and should be invaluable for teaching. Is it too much to hope that it may be translated?

MICHAEL FOGARTY

IS EVOLUTION PROVED? A debate between Douglas Dewar and H. S. Shelton with an introduction by the editor, Arnold Lunn. (Hollis and Carter; 18s.)

The subject of this book is well expressed by its title. The protagonists in a series of letters on various aspects of the theory of evolution, discuss the scientific evidence for and against it. The book naturally displays the faults of the method; there is too much sparring and acrimony, too much repetition and tedious efforts to clear up misunderstanding. But at the end of it all there emerges a fairly clear picture of what is to be said for and against the theory. The principal argument for evolution is that it connects and so affords an explanation of many and various biological phenomena: the principal argument against it is its incompleteness, its inability to demonstrate many matters which it asserts. The theory by its nature cannot be proved in the sense that e.g. the atomic theory of matter is proved: the title of the book is therefore unfortunate. The real question is whether the theory is an account of the history of life probable enough to be accepted without serious doubt, on scientific, as distinguished from metaphysical grounds. To the reviewer it seems that Mr Dewar has not raised objections sufficient to outweigh the general total of evidence, which is thought adequate by the great

majority of the present-day biologists. It is clear that in assessing the probability of the theory of evolution we are not to confine ourselves to scientific evidence, as does this book, but are entitled to consider philosophical and theological aspects of the subject and the book would have been more useful had it given more space to these. To most scientists, including some Catholics, it seems very unlikely that God should be continually intervening in the course of biology and almost never in chemistry or physics. Such continuous interventions seem to them a less perfect mode of conducting a universe than the creation of a single primordial matter capable of actualising all the potentialities of life. Is such a feeling a mere fashion, as Dewar would have it, or is it a valid inference from the continuity and order of all the other phenomena with which we are acquainted? It seems that the Catholic need not positively reject or accept the theory of evolution, but rather take account of it as a likely account of the history of life and consider how it may be reconciled with the truths of faith. Let us remember the word of God to Job: 'Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the world?' and refrain from positive assertions or denials concerning the manner in which we and other living creatures have, under God, come to be. The book is highly recommended to those who seek to form an opinion on its subject, with the proviso that those who know nothing of biology or palaeontology will find most of its arguments far from easy to follow. The number of mis-spelt technical terms is surprisingly large in view of the fact that the book boasts two authors and an editor.

F. S. T.

DECADENCE. By C. E. M. Joad. (Faber; 12s. 6d.)

This 'philosophical inquiry' will be remarkably easy reading for those who know little or no philosophy. Indeed, the only serious drawback is that readers will get the impression that philosophy always can and therefore ought to be expressed with equal clarity for the uninitiated. In his otherwise excellent defence of the philosophical *vulgarisateur*, Dr Joad appears to be saying: 'I can make it simple, why can't Whitehead?' And simple he certainly does make it.

His central theme is that the *species intelligibilis* is not a *medium quod cognoscitur*, but a *medium quo*. This of course is not how Dr Joad puts it, but the whole book is a remarkably full and clear exposition of the consequences of abandoning this fundamental principle of thomist epistemology: decadence consists essentially in 'dropping the object'. Logical positivism is an obvious target for his attack, but he goes far beyond current fashions in philosophy to discuss and criticise also the weaknesses of the contemporary outlook on politics, art and religion. As becomes an exponent of common-sense philosophy, he is alert to judge concrete situations