

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

quite fearlessly in the light of it; among the more delightful of his 'personal observations' is that on the writer in the country: 'The southern counties of England are dotted with the "country cottages" of cultivated and literary persons. The man writes or paints and drinks manful pints with silent labourers in bar parlours or, worse, seeks to jolly them into an unnatural animation. The wife with inadequate and reluctant help toils distressfully at the oil stove to give the husband the kind of meals to which he and she have been accustomed in town. . . . Having thus surrounded himself with a social and intellectual vacuum, the man proceeds to write.' A minor point, perhaps, but illustrative of the author's lightness of touch and penetrating judgment which are applied to more urgent problems.

EDWARD QUINN

RELIGION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. Edited by Vergilius Ferm.
(New York Philosophical Library; 5 dollars.)

Twenty-eight religions, each expounded by a recognised representative, for a little over a guinea! It may even be more expensive by the time these lines appear. It is not the purpose of the book to set a choice before the reader or to invite him to weld the various religions into one comprehensive whole—under such conditions the Catholic contributor could not have participated—but having got his team into print, the editor expresses the hope of a 'coming religion that will cut across the streams of religious tradition and merge the values of all the faiths'.

E. Q.

THE APPROACH TO METAPHYSICS. By E. W. F. Tomlin. (Kegan Paul; 12s. 6d.)

The author's title and claims are so modest as rather to disarm criticism from the start. We will therefore state a few simple facts with little comment. At the head of the book there stands a text from Collingwood defining metaphysics as 'no futile attempt at knowing what lies beyond the limits of experience, but primarily at any given time an attempt to discover what the people of that time believe about the world's general nature. . . . Secondly it is the attempt to discover the corresponding presuppositions of other peoples and other times, and to follow the historical process by which one set of presuppositions has turned into another'. If this be metaphysics, a mixture of history and sociology, we are bound to admit that the author has more or less justified his title. Sparks of hope are now and again kindled in the reader that some truths about knowledge are going to be stated and defended, but he is disappointed. Thought is not, it would seem, destined to discover truth; it is only an endless adventure in which it is important that