

THE CONCEPT OF DEITY. By E. O. James, D.LITT., PH.D., D.D., F.S.A. (Hutchinson's University Library; 18s.)

As might be expected, even that portion of Professor James's Wilde lectures which has gone to the formation of this book represents a masterly survey from the standpoint of the comparative study of religion of the origin and development of the idea of God. The author is also at home with the methods and material of the subordinate sciences and ready with an interpretation of the evidence which always commands respect and merits serious consideration. The sources are well-controlled and the large mass of material easily fitted into the plan of the book, but there is some overlapping and the arrangement of the chapters is not always easy to understand. The primitive conception of Providence is a good starting point, but the work is not chronologically arranged and the primitives continue to appear even up to the last chapter on Revelation. Nor does the sequence 'Anthropomorphism', 'Monolatry and Monotheism', 'Dualism', 'Philosophy of Theism', accord with the principles of a logical division; analogy, which would seem most appropriately treated in the last of these chapters, is considered in the first. It is also at least misleading for students and more serious general readers, for whom presumably this series is intended, to find Aristotle's failure to bring the unmoved mover nearer to the world of change (described as a radical dualism) fittingly treated in the same chapter as the Manichees.

Professor James recognises that there is something in religious phenomena which is beyond the scope of pure philosophy to interpret. However one conceives it, revelation must be invoked and may justly be called 'an inductive category'. But in his justifiable anxiety to reject that distinction between the natural and the supernatural which renders the latter completely beyond any human expression, he appears not wholly to appreciate the limitations of reason or 'spiritual experience'. It may be through the neglect of Catholic theologians that he finds something shocking in the statement that we believe in the Immaculate Conception 'with the same faith' as in the Trinity; but in the vast range of his reading it is surprising that he has not found that all God's utterances merit the same obedience because they *are* God's, no matter what their content.

The book deserves careful study by our modern atheists. For although there is nothing that directly concerns their plight, there is ample evidence of the reality of God in human experience and of his insistent presence, even when both primitive and civilised men think that they have no need of him.

EDWARD QUINN.