

his readers with an ad hoc survey of both leave much to be desired. Such statements as 'the saints were better for most purposes than the minor angels because they had been on earth' as a sample of mediaeval theology hardly commends Professor Bernal's grasp of his subject. Silence is more easily excused and understood than nonsense by the confession that this is not one's subject.

In the essay entitled 'The unholy alliance' Professor Bernal speaks of the intellectual dishonesty which gave birth to the compromise made by an earlier generation of scientists between science and religion by which both parties agreed to keep up appearances by avoiding one another in the street. Professor Bernal's solution lies not in ignoring theologians but in ignoring the claims of theology to throw light on any contemporary problem. But he would not merely ignore theology but dethrone it and replace it with the dialectical materialism of Marxism in which he finds no such intellectual dishonesty. It is however a dishonesty differing in kind though not in degree to claim more for one's wares than they are worth. His treatment of the origin of the universe opens with the assertion that the universe need have no beginning and continues by pointing out that we can know nothing of the origin of the universe and that a philosophy is to be judged by what it does not say rather than by what it does say on this subject. He makes no mention of the fact that physicists have on purely scientific grounds proposed several at least very probable conclusions about the origin in time of the universe as for example in the law of increasing entropy. When on the other hand he reaches the causal as opposed to the temporal origin of the universe, Bernal ignores the challenge of St Thomas's teaching on contingency and his own attempt to explain this 'inexplicable' problem neither proposes an infinite series nor faces the implications of a finite series but talks vaguely of 'odd hundreds of stable atom nuclei' and 'assemblages of elementary particles' and 'the previous existence (unproved but pointed to) of a more concentrated universe in which the first atoms were built out of lighter units and where their formation led to a critical state which was resolved by the condensation of stars and their scattering in whirls through space'. To say that this is as far as one can go as a scientist is one thing, but to deny *a priori* the validity of *any* attempt by philosophy to go further is another.

T. HARPER.

DOGMATICS IN OUTLINE. By Karl Barth. (S.C.M. Press; 12s.6d.)

In this series of his lectures Dr Barth gives a summary of his theological position. While the book contains nothing which will surprise the reader of his other works, it will be useful to the student who merely wants an outline of the typical Barthian opinions. Here, as in everything else he has written, Dr Barth stresses the utter remoteness of the divine 'other', who lies beyond any human potentiality. The great problem for the Barthian is how to explain

any valid apprehension of the Christian revelation on the part of the Church in terms which are not either meaningless or contradictory.

IAN HISLOP, O.P.

THE ORIGINS AND HISTORY OF RELIGIONS. By John Murphy. (Manchester University Press; 25s.)

LITTÉRATURE RELIGIEUSE. Edited by Joseph Chaine and René Grousset. (Armand Colin, Paris; n.p.)

Dr Murphy has written an excellent account of the findings of recognised authorities on the Origins of Religion. He provides a description of the development of religious beliefs from those of the Primitive Horizon to the great historic cults of the Civilised Horizon. His account of Primitive and Tribal religion are the best parts of the book, though he might well have made more use of psychological interpretations. It may seem at first sight more objective to rely on Ecology to provide the key, but in advancing theories which account for stimulation one must not overlook the subtle (even at the Primitive level) nature of the reaction.

Dr Murphy's book is full of interesting hints, but like so many works on the subject far too much space is given to the hypotheses of urbane dons about primitive religion and too little evidence is advanced to support some of the argumentation. Dr Murphy certainly deals Father Schmidt some shrewd blows but the fact remains that 'Primitive Religion' is still 90 per cent hypothesis and ten per cent evidence. The sections on Tribal Religion are full of an interest, which dies away when the great historic religions are discussed, for though each account is sound enough in itself, they, for the most part, leave the reader wondering why on earth anyone ever really followed such systems. In fact for all his learning Dr Murphy avoids, perhaps he means to, answering the question, what is all this theory and fact about?

*Littérature Religieuse* is a collection of excerpts from the written texts of the great world religions. Competent commentaries and smudgy illustrations are provided for all the sections, as well as bibliographical information. A notable omission from the commentary is any account of the reversal of scholars' interpretations of various elements in Hindu thought owing to the discoveries at Mohenjo-daro.

IAN HISLOP, O.P.

SIR ARTHUR EDDINGTON: MAN OF SCIENCE AND MYSTIC. (The second A. S. Eddington Memorial Lecture.) (Cambridge University Press; 2s.)

In this slight lecture the author touches glancingly on Eddington's work, confining himself in the main to generalities about the Universe, Light and Movement. His concern is to relate the point of view of physics to the realities of religion and mysticism. Although he makes no contribution to systematic thought, his approach may help to break down the notion that science is the sole road to truth.