

BOOK REVIEWS

Theologie und Physik, HEIMO DOLCH, Verlag Herder, Freiburg i.Br., 1951, viii and 110 pages.

It is difficult to regard this approach to a reconciliation between the philosophies of religion and science any more favourably than that made 300 years ago by DESCARTES. The latter's attempt to reach a theodicy through geometry and science failed because it was in fact an attempt to read a pre-conceived theory of God into science. DESCARTES could make no progress with his cosmology except by bringing in God to underwrite, explain and justify every impasse into which his regime of universal doubt landed him. The God he so introduced was in fact the God of his early religious faith and as the introduction had to be made before the excogitator could pass beyond his own "*cogito, ergo sum*", it was small wonder that the adventure became merely a scientific rationalisation of established theology. The criticism might be applied *mutatis mutandis* to the book under review.

The writer of this attempts to draw upon "*Der Wandel in der Strukturauffassung naturwissenschaftlicher Erkenntnisse und seine theologische Bedeutung*", as a basis to show revealed religion, not merely as of equal status with scientific knowledge because of its supposed grounding in empirical and observable fact, but even more so as having transcendent significance because of its fundamental characteristic of "waiting" and "hearing" as the means of "receiving" from an active supernatural source.

No religiously-minded man will disagree with the fundamental nature and validity of historical and presently active Revelation—many will, however, disagree strenuously with any attempt to find its main criteria outside the inner spiritual life and rely rather (in super-scientific fashion) on physical and observable manifestations of the "miraculous" (das Wunder). This is to throw the philosophy of religion back into the arms of St. Thomas Aquinas, no doubt intentionally, and at the same time nullify three centuries of intellectual wrestling to justify religious experience in its own significance, without copying the methods of scientific knowledge which obviously pursue their own technique and incidentally can only be applied via speculative hypotheses framed in terms of purely mental constructs.

It may be that the molar world of classic physics and the microscopic world of atomic physics offer a parallel of "a world within a world" which will help us to conceive of the physical universe as existing within a transcendent spiritual world of a completely "other" kind—but the analogy is really no more than an aid through picture-thinking. It is no justification for the re-introduction of the Thomist "Prinzip von der doppelten Wahrheit", as guaranteeing that the worlds of Revelation and Science are opposite sides of a common universe. This may well be true but the conviction must stem ultimately from faith in Reason—that spiritual reason which enables man, with St. Paul, to interpret spiritual things in spiritual terms. There is no need for, and no validity in, an attempt to look to "the miraculous", or what are described as "konkrete Lebensstatsachen in bekannten makrophysikalischen Raum", as a means of grounding religion, like science, in observation of empirical fact.

The desire is understandable, but unsound in principle, which argues "Es ist eine je nach der Erkenntnisquelle—natürliche Vernunft oder Offenbarung—in gestufter Entsprechung auf einen Sinn-Kern hin verschiedene Aussage vom demselben realen Objekt nicht unmöglich". The Cartesian character of the approach is shown by the conclusion: "Es schien dabei wichtig, die Wunderfrage genauer zu untersuchen, weil die Wunder nach der Lehre der Kirche in ausgezeichneter Weise solche koppelnden Tatsachen sind".

Sir HENRY SELF (London)

Kurzes Lehrbuch der Enzymologie (3. erweiterte Auflage), TH. BERSIN, Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Geest & Portig K.-G., Leipzig 1951, pp. viii + 274, 44 fig. relié DM. 19.20.

Il y a plus de dix ans qu'a paru la deuxième édition du traité bien connu de TH. BERSIN. Depuis, l'enzymologie a fait des progrès considérables; en publiant cette troisième édition de son "*Kurzes Lehrbuch der Enzymologie*", l'auteur a cherché à y introduire un choix de ce qui, dans la masse des nouveaux faits décrits dans la littérature, présentait un degré de certitude et un intérêt suffisants.