

merely and not the act too of teaching. Theology, as the renewal in Christ the Word of the apprehension of the given as gift and grace, is an act of living faith, faith informed by charity; it is the expression as communication of the communion of the Church. The emphasis on the 'sociology of knowledge' (not implying by this phrase any adherence to the positions of the late Professor Mannheim) is the most important contribution to theology made by the recent advances in social anthropology.

C.E.

AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION. By E. G. Parrinder. (Hutchinson's University Library; 8s. 6d.)

This short book, one of a series of popular accounts of religions, is intended to permit African tribal religions to take a place in the knowledge of the general reader beside the great religious systems of the world, with which he is presumed to be more familiar. In part, it seems to be aimed at a public which accepts the crude stereotypes of African 'witch-doctors' and mumbo-jumbo of the cinema and of popular literature. It seems doubtful if such people will relinquish their fantasies for the understanding of somewhat unexciting African pieties which Mr Parrinder mildly and judiciously commends.

The reader who is prepared to take African tribal religions seriously, however, may wish that Mr Parrinder had been less ready to place them at the side of religions with literate, theological traditions, as though they were capable of the same sort of study as, say, Buddhism or Islam. The way in which African tribesmen apprehend their world and God is not, indeed, less interesting or deserving of study than are the beliefs and customs of the greater part of the faithful in religions with developed theological science and a known history of expansion. But these religions, *as subjects of specialized study*, are surely not of the same kind as the composite 'African Traditional Religion' which Mr Parrinder has had to create in order to write this book at all. It is unlikely, then, that the book will persuade a student of any of the great religious systems that there is anything in pagan Africa which would repay the careful scholarship they give to their texts and inscriptions. Students of the religious thought of literate people are able to examine the commentaries of believers who have reflected upon and submitted to reason, after their fashion, the faith which they have held; there is no comparable corpus of refined criticism for the student of African tribal religions.

Moreover, the vocabulary familiarly used in England for the discussion of African religious conceptions, and from which Mr Parrinder, in such a popular survey, cannot escape, would scarcely be acceptable

for any discussion of theology or philosophy among the educated orthodox of any of the 'great' religions. The coherence of many African tribal religions is often apparent, as Mr Parrinder suggests, on a poetic and metaphorical, and not any doctrinal or philosophical, level; it is probably in that direction that we need to seek to understand the strength of African religion, and its dignity as a subject of serious study. When reduced to a matter of intuitions of theological and philosophical propositions which have been more fully developed by other, literate, peoples, any African tribal religion must necessarily appear at a disadvantage. This is far from Mr Parrinder's intention; indeed, he is well-known for his efforts to lead his readers to a fuller understanding and sympathy than has often been considered possible, for notions which the ignorant and self-complacent still easily dismiss as gibberish. If this book should encourage any of them to read some of the works in its bibliography, it will have served a useful purpose. I doubt if it will do so, however, unless they are interested in representing African religion primarily as an intuition of the Christian revelation. This will scarcely advance our knowledge of African tribal religions, and may obscure those differences between them and other religions which make them worthy of special investigation.

R. G. LIENHARDT

THE WESTERN DILEMMA. By Alan Gordon Smith. (Longmans; 11s. 6d.)

The western dilemma, as Mr Gordon Smith sees it, is that we in the West have lost faith not only in Christianity but also in reason. We continue to believe in certain human values, but we have no weapons left with which to defend them. For it is the power of reason to know anything with certainty which cannot be verified by sense experience which is now in question. The first part of his book is therefore a study of the grounds for 'belief in reason', and we recommend it as one of the most effective answers to the Logical Positivist position which we have ever read. For Mr Gordon Smith meets the Logical Positivist on his own ground. That all knowledge is derived from sense experience is a position common to both Logical Positivist and Thomist; it is therefore from the analysis of sense experience that all philosophy must start. But it is here that Mr Gordon Smith finds fault with the whole empiricist tradition which derives from Hume; it has failed to analyse the data of sense experience correctly. He then goes on to show that all the fundamental metaphysical ideas of existence, substance, causality and freedom are derived directly from sense experience. They are derived from reflection on the 'initial consciousness of lived reality', from a primitive awareness which precedes all rational consciousness and even sense perception, but which upon reflection becomes a