

immense value and important. M. Schuon writes in the name of a contemplative wisdom which is the fruit of intellectual intuition, and this is something which is fundamental in Christian tradition both of East and West. He writes of this: 'Intellectual intuition comprises essentially a contemplativity which in no way enters into the rational capacity, the latter being logical rather than contemplative; it is contemplative power, receptivity in respect of the Uncreated Light, the opening of the Eye of the Heart, which distinguishes transcendent intelligence from reason'. This is surely something which we need to recover. In ancient Christian tradition theology was not the rational system which it has now become but essentially a science of contemplation—as St Bede said: 'there is but one theology, the contemplation of God'. It is particularly in our contact with the religious traditions of the East that this perspective needs to be recovered. It is the great task of the theology of the future to incorporate the metaphysical tradition, of which M. Schuon writes, into Christian doctrine and to show how it finds its real fulfilment in Christ, and this can only be done on the basis of a theology which is inspired by contemplative wisdom.

Meanwhile, though we may not agree with M. Schuon, there is much that we can learn from him. Some of the later chapters of his book *On Seeing God Everywhere* and on the Christian Tradition often show a profound insight; his meditation on the Hail Mary is particularly interesting, though it has a strongly Gnostic flavour. The translation has been done by Mr Palmer, who is well known for his admirable translations of the *Philokalia*. M. Schuon's style is never easy and it does not become easier in translation, but the English is as faithful a rendering as one could ask.

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THE SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE. By W. Stark. (Routledge and Kegan Paul; 36s.)

The last twenty years have seen a gradual converging in the social sciences of studies which earlier had been pursued in relative isolation; of psychology and sociology, of anthropology and psychology, of sociology and anthropology, to name but three of the major related subjects. Even within these major categories, the areas of interpenetration have become increasingly significant in recent years. Where, before the two World Wars, there was a parallel existence of studies bearing the name social psychology conducted on the one side by scholars whose training had been primarily psychological and on the other by professional sociologists, it was not until relatively recently, that these two fields of study began to converge.

In the more difficult relations between social science and social philosophy far less has been achieved as yet. The antipathy of the early sociologists to social philosophy has given place to a reluctance on the part of many sociologists to discuss statements of a philosophical nature in case they might contain 'value-judgments'. The bias of contemporary philosophy to an almost exclusive concern with linguistic analysis has not helped professional philosophers to interest themselves over much with the philosophy of the social sciences.

Dr Stark's study on the sociology of knowledge is an attempt to bridge the gulf between the sociological and the philosophical approach to the problem of knowledge. The study is rather hard reading because Dr Stark's method is fundamentally a dialectical one. The central problem must in some way be connected with the ultimate values inherent in social systems, because it is only when ultimate questions of truth and value are at issue that philosophy makes contact with subsidiary subjects. After the preliminary chapter, therefore, he is concerned to outline the relation of value concepts to the sociological approach to the subject.

The principal distinction to be made by the sociologist when confronted with value concepts is between their entry into a chain of reasoning, and the enclosure of the whole chain of reasoning within certain basic definitions. The former is rightly suspect in any scientific analysis of social reality, the latter necessary for a complete understanding of a social system, for the social framework as a whole is a value system. The sociological approach to the problem of knowledge, therefore, concerns the perspective of thinkers, and the social origin of their thinking. While the materials of knowledge represent what is potentially knowable, a fact only stands out from the chaos of what is potentially knowable, when we put some question to reality. Questions are put to reality from differing intellectual standpoints from age to age. Each generation selects and focuses upon those elements in the material of knowledge which answer the specific needs and interests of the generation in question. The author quotes as illustration Max Scheler's example of the origin of the modern world-view, as a value structure centred upon the desire to dominate the material world, which expressed itself theologically in Calvinism, politically in Bodin's doctrine of sovereignty, and in Thomas Hobbes, Machiavelli, and others. This world view ousted by degrees the value structure of feudalism with its high valuation of the dominion of man over man, and of man over the organic realm. It ousted at the same time the contemplative quest for knowledge of the priests and monks of the medieval universities whose desire was only to see and mentally to mirror the essences of reality.

These values which are established at the basis of a world view are 'value-facts', objective values, not subjective valuations. They are given in and by the life of the society concerned, and are operative before any individual can assert any private prejudice of his own. These value-facts manoeuvre a man into a particular situation, but there will always be an objective assessment of the situation, an objective truth in that situation. This was the essential position taken up by Heinrich Rickert and of Max Weber, and it is the position taken by Dr Stark. It is a valuable contribution to English readers in sociology to have this important matter dealt with at length and in detail, for the evaluative element implicit in our own sociological thinking is often overlooked. We must also be grateful to the author for the many references to contemporary sociology not yet translated into English, which are explicitly concerned with this subject.

The philosophical treatment on the validity of the key concepts of social systems is in some ways less satisfactory. It may be because Dr Stark to some extent attempts to carry the methods of sociological analysis into philosophy. The reader is carried into the philosophical arena almost without realizing it. The transition from a study of the origin of ideas to a study of their validity involves raising fundamental questions of methodology. The pre-logical thought of primitive peoples is examined, and the extent to which primitive thought appears to follow principles different from our own is assessed. The researches of Marcel Granet into the use of number in classical Chinese civilization is also examined.

More difficult is the problem of the validity of fundamental concepts in what Dr Stark calls factual knowledge. He distinguishes between facts of nature and social facts. The relative permanence of natural science, in spite of evolution, is in marked contrast to the fluidity of social change. The history of natural science has as a consequence been different from that of the social sciences. The former has on the whole been a constructive development of scientific knowledge. But in the social sphere, man has been not so much a discoverer of truths as a creator of values. Now, while the distinction between facts of nature and social facts is of significance in some contexts, from the point of view of philosophical method, this seems hardly the crucial distinction here. To the philosopher, who is concerned with the validity of the key concepts of knowledge, and the correct methodological procedure, the key distinction is within the social sciences themselves. There are two basically distinct kinds of social theory; there is factual social theory and normative social theory. The former uses scientific method in much the same way as does natural science, it goes through the same stages of development, from the natural history stage of collecting relevant facts, to the stage of hypothesis and theory. Sociology

belongs to this stream of development. The method of proof and of procedure in normative social theory and social philosophy is radically different. It seems to me that Dr Stark is attempting to arrive at the broad conclusions of normative theory by scientific methods, and that he finds himself face to face with the same difficulties which Comte faced when he began the fashion of making a metaphysics out of sociology.

The temptation to make a kind of meta-sociology is all the greater in these days, when metaphysics is still taboo in so many scientific circles, and Dr Stark appears to subscribe to the prevalent prejudice that metaphysics is divorced from the empirical order. While this may be true of much metaphysics written since the Renaissance, it is hardly true of metaphysics as traditionally conceived in ancient and medieval thought, where the concepts of metaphysics were arrived at by a series of abstractions from the concepts of empirical experience. I therefore do not think that the tasks which Dr Stark has set out to achieve will be complete when he has completed his meta-sociology. This meta-sociology will be but a more refined and abstract tool in what is essentially factual social theory. The problems of normative theory may as a consequence have been made easier precisely to formulate, but meta-sociology alone will hardly be able to answer them all.

DANIEL WOOLGAR, O.P.

COMMUNISM AND THE THEOLOGIANS. By Charles West. (S.C.M. Press; 35s.)

The Assistant Director of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey seems to have drawn on two sources for his book: one source is the writings of some Protestant theologians, the other is the author's and other men's experience of life under various Communist régimes. Few readers will feel that his first source has provided him with living material; somehow his theologians come through as very bookish and ineffectual. It is the other source which saves the book from being nothing but an academic study. Its avowed object—the encounter between Communism and theologians—does not give one the impression of relevance which is given by the discussion of the less clearly avowed one—the encounter between Christians and Communists. This encounter is discussed in a stimulating way and the closing pages of the book are perhaps the most valuable ones.

'Only the Christian's humble but confident journey itself . . . can convince his neighbour that the Lord and the guide of the journey is the servant son of God who bore the cross.'

Before we can get to this relevant section we must wade through a good many pages of less vital quality. The teaching of the five main