

interest", which Vauban had called the "father" of war, was made, as with Norman Angell, the principal bulwark of peace.' And it has let man down.

The book, then, is a signal 'diagnosis' *a posteriori*, from symptoms, of a malady the theologians and philosophers have long been diagnosing *a priori*. The 'treatment' for the malady is clearly a recovery of what has been lost, in absolute standards, and in the sense of vocation in work. An extended inquiry into these things was, perhaps, hardly to be expected in what is *ex professo* a work of history. But there is hardly more than even a hint of them. The concluding chapter does not build up to an insistence on some theological essence such as alone made the sixteenth-eighteenth century Christian afterglow at all comprehensible. His plea is rather for an amorphous loyalty to 'the welfare of the human being under God as our objective', labouring 'for the best in the human being'. This may well be Humanism at its noblest. But it is not more.

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MORALS AND MAN IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES. By J. V. Langmead-Casserley. (Longmans; 12s. 6d.)

The aim of Dr Langmead-Casserley's book is 'to explore the rôle of the relative in Christianity, and the possibility of the absolute in sociology' (p. 7) so as 'to search out a position and point of view in and from which some mutual accommodation and understanding between the sociological and theological aims and moods may be successfully established'. (p. 5.) He is convinced, rightly, that 'the immense, and too often latent, intellectual potentialities of Christian doctrine are capable of bearing this great burden of intellectual synthesis, that Christian thought at this critical juncture of our civilisation is the only intellectual force capable of interpreting our variegated culture as a single coherent idea and thus supplying it with the unity and consistency which it now so sorely needs'. (pp. 17, 18.)

A thomist will follow with the utmost sympathy and genuine appreciation the lines of thought traced by Dr Langmead-Casserley as he strives to achieve his aim. Some samples of his thought will illustrate its quality: 'The problem of the proper place and function of reason in human life is one of the most important themes of contemporary discussion.' (p. 161.) 'The only way out of ultimate relativism lies through metaphysics.' (p. 114.) "'I am a person" and so saying I step into another dimension.' (p. 108.) 'The real bias of the contemporary attitude towards ethics is expressed in empirical social relativism, in the *a priori* relativism of the logical positivists, and in what might be called the realistic metaphysical relativism of the Existentialists.' (p. 77.)

One need not be told, therefore, that Dr Langmead-Casserley is in sympathy with, and admiration of, 'the once despised and perversely interpreted philosophy of the middle ages' and that he gives full credit to 'the greatness and lasting value of its achievement in metaphysics' and still more in ethics. (cf. p. 76.) He shows that various modern systems of ethical theory represent 'a falling away from the comprehensiveness, concreteness and realism of medieval ethical theory'. (p. 72.) And, in another very illuminating sentence, he indicates how 'the violence of modern politics and the predatory self-assertion and self-interest characteristic of an industrial and commercialised civilisation' follow from the substitution of 'the concept of sovereignty, in which man appears as the maker and master of law', for 'the (thomistic) concept of an absolute rule of law to which all forms of human power must submit'. (p. 146.)

One only regrets that Dr Langmead-Casserley is not more fully master of the thomistic synthesis. He would then distinguish more clearly between the natural and the supernatural (pp. 51, 139); the problem that gives him so much trouble—the distinction between man and nature—might even appear to be a pseudo-problem; he would see that the institution of property not only can be defended, but that it must be upheld (p. 54); he would, I think, revise his estimate, at least as touching thomism, 'that medieval thought as a whole underestimates the extent of the relative element in social ethics'. (p. 59); and he would certainly not have committed himself to the suggestion that men are not 'even usually free and responsible'. (p. 143.)

These remarks are meant as a compliment to a writer whose work is worthy of real study and critical appraisal.

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SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY. By E. E. Evans-Pritchard. (Cohen and West; 8s. 6d.)

Most people who have dipped into the vast mass of anthropological writing find themselves very quickly bewildered by the variety and divergence of the views which they encounter. We come across a whole forest of facts, but these facts seem to mean quite different things in each of the works we consult. At times it appears that such writings are essays of creative imagination and that each expert recreates the history of cultures and institutions in the light of some intuition derived from whatever may be the integrating feature of his own *Weltanschauung*. Our confusion is increased when we pick up one of the modern 'field work' monographs, for we probably do so in the hope that they will provide evidence which will refute or confirm some theory which we have encountered in Marrett, or James, or Frazer; instead, they seem