

uncovenanted ways of providence to make one pause before this grim analysis of political neurosis, this all but determinist alphabet of disaster. But it is surely true that 'Men have been at war with nature and therefore at war with one another'. No amount of political action or economic planning can escape the cardinal fact of man's place in the essential rhythm of nature, and his miseries must sooner or later be traced back to his abuse of his proper relation to the whole pattern of created things.

*The Estate of Man* is not a comfortable book, and some of its argument may sound too much like the detached observations of the airman while the city and its people burn below. But it provides much of the material which the Christian sociologist should be considering, and nothing short of its fundamental seriousness is enough for an account of man's destiny—or his disaster.

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

TRADITION AND THE SPIRIT. By Daniel Jenkins. (Faber and Faber; 12s. 6d.)

One of the problems which arose at the Malines Conversations was the meaning of tradition in Christian teaching, and there is no doubt that Protestants find the subject perplexing or even shocking. Their difficulty must appear strange to Catholics, to whom it seems illogical to accept any one of the orthodox creeds without recognising that such formulations are based on the power of the Church to discern and explicate the content of Revelation, and to relate (or to refuse to relate) propositions and facts within the fundamental unity of faith.

The difficulty felt by Protestants that traditions and authority involve extrinsic coercion seems paradoxical when it is remembered that the authority that lies behind the traditions is that of Christ himself; the Church, under divine guidance, merely presents and interprets what is given. What is given is not an external imposition productive of mere mechanical consent, for consent is given in the context of faith. He who has the gift of faith responds to the teaching of the Church, because through the power of grace he has the ability to conform himself to the light which flows from the Word through the Church. This confirmation is not forced, but spontaneous, since the power of the grace of God in the soul of the faithful Christian attunes him to the voice of the Church. The point is that both faith in its subjective aspect and the magisterium of the Church are elements in the situation constituted by the way in which God has chosen to speak to men.

Mr Jenkins, who is a well-known Protestant theologian, has, in his latest work, attempted to formulate a Protestant account of tradition. His book is interesting, and he does face up to the difficulties which arise for a traditional Protestant owing to the insistence of modern

scholars on the importance of tradition as a Scriptural notion, and as an important element in the thought of the Fathers. The older view of such writers as those quoted in Heppe's *Reformed Dogmatics* is no longer in fashion, for they asserted that Scripture carries its own authority with it, since it is essentially a beam of divine light, and as the Word of God it is to be identified with the Holy Spirit. For such theologians tradition is otiose. Recently, however, in various forms, the theology of *Krisis* has revived the view of Calvin who drew a distinction between the Word which is Christ, the document which is the manifestation of the Word, and the hearing of the Word in the Holy Spirit. This formulation allows for 'the testimony of those who have gone before', so that even so radical a theologian as Barth can speak of tradition as having a 'lofty and important significance'.

Mr Jenkins, for his part, asserts that the Church lives in the dimension of tradition, but in saying this he does not intend to commit himself to the Catholic doctrine of tradition. He holds that the understanding of the Scriptures as the Word of God gives an interpretation which is normative for the understanding of tradition, but maintains that this understanding occurs within the context of the life of the Church (a phrase to which a very wide meaning is given). The understanding is constituted by an 'existential contact' or 'living encounter between God and man', by which man is set by the Spirit within the community of faith. The sign of the presence of the Spirit is the *Krisis* of faith, which implies radical criticism of the human theological awareness and, at the same time, conviction regarding the assured central content of Scripture.

From this standpoint Mr Jenkins proceeds to criticise the Catholic position. His attack reveals a fundamental misunderstanding of the position of the Church. He argues that the Catholic notion of tradition implies a mechanical assurance which destroys responsibility. This criticism is based on his view that Catholic teaching conceives of the *depositum fidei* as a body of propositions, clear and precise, which was given to the Apostles, and that it fails to allow for a personal verdict in faith on the evidence traditioned.

The misunderstanding arises, I think, from an undue concentration on the treatment of tradition as a separate source by theologians, without proceeding to consider their discussions of the nature of tradition in the wide sense. Tradition in the wide sense is not a sort of appendix of truths left out of the Scriptures, a mysterious bundle of propositions. It means rather the Spirit-inspired mind of the Church, her ability to present and interpret the Word of God. Its basis lies in the divine guidance of the Church, in her power, given by Christ, to state truth within the confines of revelation. To use Moehler's terminology,

in the subjective sense tradition is simply the Spirit living in the Church, the frame of reference, as it were, having been constituted by the teaching of the Word made flesh. In this sense there is only one source of faith, Christ speaking in and through the Church. Within this context we can distinguish two modes of transmission, the second of which is tradition in the narrow sense by which unwritten truths are handed over in the life of the Church, in which the sense of revelation is maintained and by which, through the divinely appointed organs, this sense can be defined.

Tradition in the active sense is the handing over by an authorised teaching agent. This does not mean the handing down of a parcel of conclusions, but the being brought in immediate contact with Christ's own teaching through an authentic teacher. Tradition, in short, is the proclamation of the Church of which the Bible is the principle part, but not the only part, since apostolic tradition provides both the context and the interpretation of the Bible. It simply states that it was the Church that was sent by Christ.

When the Council of Trent refers to truths contained *in sine scripto traditionibus*, its words are to be understood as referring to tradition in the narrow sense and in the light of the fact that the Council is condemning the view that 'we allow of no other judge in matters of faith . . . than God himself speaking through the Scriptures'.

Mr Jenkins has written an interesting and stimulating book, but one which needs to be used with care.

IAN HISLOP, O.P.

SOLOVJEV UND DER PROTESTANTISMUS. Von Ludolf Müller. Nachwort von Wl. Szykarski. (Herder, Freiburg; 6.50 DM.)

There is already a considerable literature on Vladimir Soloviev from the Catholic and Orthodox points of view, but as yet little or nothing from the Protestant angle. Dr Müller's book seeks to fill this gap, and sketches the development of Soloviev's thought in relation to all three confessions. As is well known, Soloviev distinguished three main principles of 'Christian theocracy'—Tradition (represented especially by the Eastern Church), Authority (represented especially by the Roman Church), and Spiritual Freedom (represented especially by Protestantism)—and for long he looked to a reunion of Christendom to re-combine them in their authentic *Spannungseinheit* after their unhappy historical divergence. When this dream proved illusory, he submitted to the Roman obedience as the only safeguard of the unity which he felt to be all-important.

Dr Müller traces clearly enough the two phases of Soloviev's thought which correspond to his Orthodox and Catholic periods, but claims to