

REVIEWS

VALUES AND REALITY. By Leo Ward, C.S.C. (Sheed & Ward; 7/6.)

"To make Philosophy once more a subject gentlemen can read with pleasure" was among the ambitions of Dr. F. C. S. Schiller's *Humanism*. Modern "philosophical" popularizations often seem to aim at producing something that vulgarians can read with pleasure. Yet Fr. Ward's book is perhaps not facetious enough to please the vulgarian, is perhaps better suited to the half-educated would-be-intellectual seeking the cheap satisfaction of blaspheming what he does not understand, of being confirmed in a contempt not based on familiarity.

There was a moment when we looked forward to keen pleasure in spite of the irritating style. He undertook an analysis of the value-situation from the point of view of *valuing*, not of the *valuable*. It was thenceforth clear that we should be studying one man's theory with opposing views mentioned only as occasion arose, rather than seeing it built up by constructive criticism of current opinions. But we were keen to see how his discrimination between data and description, mere naming and interpreting, was to produce "usable" notions of "valuing" and "value" and a theory of values which would fit back into the facts. That we should be inclined to question whether some of his "facts" were not rather interpretations of fact is no more than could be expected by both author and reader. In the second and third parts of the book he compares standards with ends and values, aiming at distinguishing what others confuse; but it is not clear that he does not himself confuse them in making "humanness, or man in his environment" the standard by which to measure values ministering to man's end, the "fulness of human being," unless indeed the standard is to be quite inapplicable.

We do not imagine that students of philosophy will read the book with pleasure; we were continually noticing the aptness with which Fr. Ward's strictures on others could be applied to himself; they were uncritical, they were not lucid, they were loose, they were repetitive. He never quotes the German value-philosophers, and the Americans he refers to are, with few exceptions, not easily accessible to English readers; most of them, by the way, are not philosophers. Thus his numerous footnotes are of little use, and we are left aghast at the futilities produced by snippet quotations from straw-dummy opponents, some of whom we remember for scholarly writing; Fr. Ward can write that prudence "amounts to a kind of literal slide-rule." There is never any indication of the way these authors reached the positions alleged to be incoherent or unsatisfactory, though that would have been a basis for constructive criticism.

The book ends with a section on "The Value of Reverence."

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