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built upon the poor (it was the gibe against her) so she is now to build upon the worker. This programme is not opportunist. It is simply that circumstances and the inspiration of the spirit that dwells in the Church arouse Catholics to the knowledge of a forgotten truth. It is rather an act of contrition.

The final stage of Mr. James' argument is the triumphant one. It has begun. The J.O.C. is really doing this work. The Pope has said so. It can be seen. The consciousness of human dignity that might be lured into a grubby materialism by Communism, is being fulfilled in the workers conscious of their vocation as Brothers of Christ, Apostles, reformers of society. And even in this country, as extracts from the enquirers of the Wigan Group of the Y.C.W., which he quotes, prove, the transformation has begun. And this is New Age. It is a warfare with an enemy, Communism-cum-Militant Atheism, which has replaced by action (the only refuge of the Proletariat whose strength lies only in numbers and determination), the discussions and polite agnosticism of the Bourgeois period. Its issue can only be seen by faith in the last resort. But facts, the marvellous work of the J.O.C. especially, point to a great hope.

This "potting" of Mr. James' argument necessarily leaves out much, many great truths in fine words. Especially the beginning of the last chapter, the "Crucifixion of Labour," is such thought and such writing as makes you hold your breath.

There are defects in the book, irrelevant matter and exaggerations. A drawn-out comparison of the position of the workers to that of the Jews in the divine dispensation is overdone. The identification of the Church with the Bourgeois régime is likewise overdone. Piers Plowman occurs too frequently. Parallel as he may be he is past history and not the only prophet of the revolution in the present Worker Movement in the Church.

But such imperfections only throw into relief the greatness of this book in its essential thesis and in many unforgettable passages. The gold is well worth sifting out.

FINBAR SYNNOTT, O.P.

THREE THEORIES OF SOCIETY. By Paul Hanley Furfey.  
(Macmillan; 8s. 6d.)

Those who have read Dr. Furfey's *Fire on the Earth* will be aware of a certain transatlantic naïveté in the writing of its author, an ardour in urging the ideals of Christian charity, a degree of gusto in denouncing the mode of life of the self-interested rich. The ground plan of the present book, with its expressed intention of "turning to a discussion of the validity of the various ways of studying society" in the hope of clearing in

some measure the confusion arising from different modes of approach, suggestions at once promise and a certain element of disquiet. If the book confined itself to epistemology, the problems raised by contemporary theories of society would be considerable and the work to be done sufficiently exacting. This work, however, is hardly seriously attempted. We are offered for consideration three types of society founded on three different modes of intellectual activity. The first is called "positivistic," the second "noëtic," the third "pistic" in so far as the truths which are so widely accepted or valued in a given society as to form its spiritual foundation are of the obvious or "positivistic" order (the terms being interchangeable), of the order of the first principles of thought and morals and of artistic or poetic intuition, or of the order of supernatural faith. Contemporary America provides the example of positivistic society. (England, of course, or our own native town would have done as well.) For the other two types of society the argument proceeds at a level of more or less pure hypothesis—assuming for the second type of society, for instance, a preponderance of "noëtic individuals," and locating "noëtic" society in an Athens which might have been if Adam had not fallen or Socrates been condemned; pistic society in a heaven on earth which will be brought about when we have a preponderance of pistic individuals living socially according to their faith.

There is recognition on page 214—almost a *surprised* recognition—"that the Church constitutes a pistic society within the larger positivistic society of the modern world," but it would be difficult to think of a book covering the same ground from a Catholic pen in which there is less awareness of the *historical*, and therefore *tragic*, character of the Church's situation, or of the *historical* significance of original sin. "The effective historical forces have always been the hot animal forces of collective ambition, anger and hatred . . . the history of nations has almost invariably been a nauseating chronicle of hatred, cruelty, intrigue, plunder, bloodshed, rapine, murder, duplicity, treason, treachery, callousness, envy, lust, and evil, bestial passion of every sort." Such generalisations render history unintelligible. The conception of history as a process in which the Church has a polarising and directive mission, or indeed any conception of history beyond the repetition of individuals and situations is lacking from the book. Nature and grace are discussed with the usual clichés. Grace as a supernatural force transforming history in its movement, its conflict and its agonies are not apprehended.

The teleological method to which the author commits himself

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considers what ends men propose in forming societies and judges a society to be good or bad in so far as it is formed for good or bad ends and pursues them efficiently. The critique is of the morality of the end chosen and of the people themselves in pursuing it with vigour or slackness. This is a long step from the objective consideration of the purpose, dictated by nature, of human society as such, and from the classic conception of a perfect (NOT *morally* perfect) society as one which possesses the objectively efficacious means for fulfilling the purpose dictated by its nature. The author speaks as if the purpose of society were a matter of choice, as if membership of society were as optional as membership of a golf-club.

In rejecting "positivism" it is not at all clear that the author does not reject, or at least disparage, the full use of empirical scientific method in the study of social developments. A hesitancy to admit of specifically social causes other than the free acts of social agents suggests that the underlying conception of human freedom has at once more extension and less backbone than that of St. Thomas. At the same time it leads his analysis of social disorder in the direction of moral blame against people and groups rather than that of detecting the logic of social events and tendencies.

In attempting to discredit overspecialisation in social study, an attempt necessary enough in the promised land of industrial psychology and modern advertising, and in the desire to bring into play in social reconstruction the dynamic truths of Christian revelation, he removes his discussion, for the greater part of the book, into the realm of Utopian make-believe and wish-fulfilment. "It is pleasant to dwell on the contrast between a noëtic society and our present positivism. A fully noëtic society would not be torn asunder by war," etc. (p. 137.)

"It is pleasant to imagine what the world would be like if Catholics would join in the Holy Sacrifice in a spirit really worthy of this Divine Mystery. Then the Mystical Body would take on an extraordinary vigour . . ." etc. (p. 226.)

Again, in (p. 237) "as the faith of its members becomes more vivid, the society itself becomes more pistic . . ." vividness is regarded as the proper perfection of our faith, which will make it effective in changing society. And vividness is precisely a perfection of the images of the visual imagination which makes them "pleasant to imagine." The complaint against this type of writing is not that it appeals to us to take a living part in the Mass, but that, as writing, it is otiose and unreal.

A great deal of the matter of the book is excellent though the same cannot be said for the book as a whole. The chapters on

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the Success-Ideal of contemporary capitalistic society are good bread-and-butter sociology, with an edge of satire. The closing chapter includes exhortations of the quality of the following which well exemplifies the nature and valid scope of the author's gifts as a writer:

"Such mean souls shall not be our models. Rather, let us imitate the love of the saints, a love so hot and burning that they forget themselves entirely, died to themselves entirely, and became totally absorbed in love for God and neighbour. Let their heroic love to our ideal; for as we grow in love, so shall our society grow in excellence, reflecting the perfect beatific love of the blessed society of heaven." (p. 239.)

BERNARD KELLY.

## PHILOSOPHY

KIERKEGAARD. By Walter Lowrie, D.D. (Oxford University Press; 25s.)

The Oxford University Press has once more rendered a signal service to the cause of learning by its production of this large volume which will familiarize the reading public with a figure whose profound influence on the philosophy of religion has been too little known in England. Dr. Lowrie has given us a really valuable work, which is worthy of the serious attention of scholars and should serve as the starting point for the more detailed study of Kierkegaard's theological system. His literary style is most delightful, and the depth of research revealed by his pages is immense.

The criticisms we feel bound to make are suggested rather by the general impression left on the mind than by a careful perusal. We should have welcomed more of Dr. Lowrie and less of Kierkegaard. The learned author is too modest. He emphasizes the difficulty of Kierkegaard's expression, and yet, instead of giving us his own explanation of Kierkegaard's ideas, again and again, just at the point at which one is led to expect this, he interpolates a long extract from Kierkegaard's works. The result of this method is to introduce two grave defects, prolixity and tautology.

Again, we cannot but detect in the learned author a certain lack of discrimination. He clearly has such an enthusiastic admiration for Kierkegaard's high qualities of mind that he is inclined to gloss over the less lovely aspects of his character. Here and there we find him expressing misgivings as to incidents in his life, but on the whole his Æneas never ceases to be "pius." But of the man himself he, despite his utmost effort, fails to paint an attractive portrait. Every phase of his life reveals his arro-