

ever country I have been, I have lived there as if I had to pass all my life there . . . I am a man by necessity and a Frenchman only by accident,' and Dr Stark rightly says that his basic unifying principle is that all human beings are bound together. This likeness to the sixteenth-century Spaniard, Vitoria, leads one to notice what Dr Stark is not here particularly concerned to point out; how deeply, despite his religious and political relativism, Montesquieu is rooted in Catholic thought. In the interesting final chapter where Dr Stark succeeds in reconciling this genuine relativism based on observation with Montesquieu's equally fundamental belief in eternal values, much of what he says follows, in greater detail, scholastic discussions on the universality, yet relativity in individual cases, of the natural law. It is therefore rather unfortunate that Dr Stark refers in the same chapter to Montesquieu's general remoteness from the 'natural law philosophy' of his time, without saying that he is in fact in an older and sounder natural-law tradition, before the rationalists attempted to give it scientific exactitude.

Finally, Montesquieu is, like all the greatest thinkers, in many ways far ahead of his time. He sees how the understanding of politics is sacrificed to the study of natural sciences; he arrives under his own power at the modern sociological concept of a *culture*, of which you cannot disturb one element without incalculably changing the rest; he sees, as we are now only beginning to realise, that things are not really what they seem from a purely formal point of view, especially in the case of political institutions; and in a period when the writing of history was in its infancy, he believed that all institutions and customs must have a reasonable explanation, and went to fantastic lengths to try and understand the most obscure and repellant—a lesson many historians could well learn to-day.

Whether Dr Stark has 'proved' Montesquieu to be a pioneer of the sociology of knowledge hardly seems to matter. This excellent book could have been written without that aim, and should reach a wider public. For it delves not only into the pre-history of sociology, but into the interesting border country between politics, sociology and history. Moreover, we become familiar with the workings of a great mind, and that is perhaps the most important and educating thing of all.

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THE CHURCH AND ECONOMICS, by Christopher Hollis (A Faith and Fact Book; Burns and Oates, London; 8s. 6d.).

This is a useful book, and written in such a way that it should succeed in holding the interest of the ordinary reader who might normally be frightened by a book on economics. The approach adopted by Mr Hollis succeeds in doing two things. First, it gives the reader an insight into the way in which the social doctrine of the Church has developed, and secondly, it will convince him that there cannot be a single Catholic solution to each problem. All that the Church can do is to define what is and what is not in conformity with the moral law, so that

in nearly all problems there will be a number of solutions which are perfectly legitimate.

Chapter I deals briefly with the attitude of the early Church to economic and social problems, and then turns to the Church's attitude to usury in medieval and post-reformation times. Chapter II jumps to the late nineteenth century and Leo XIII's great encyclical *Rerum Novarum* in relation to the problems created by the Industrial Revolution. Chapter III brings us nearer our own day, to the financial crisis of the early 'thirties and Pius XI's *Quadragesimo Anno*. The last two chapters deal with international social justice and the population question, and are not so closely linked as the first three with the writings of particular authorities.

Despite its many merits, the book fails to come up to what is claimed for the Faith and Fact series as a whole. It is claimed on the cover that these books will tell the reader what he wants to know about the Catholic Church and its views on a wide range of topics. He might reasonably expect that a book bearing the title *The Church and Economics* would give him a concise account of what the Church teaches in regard to the major economic problems of the day. Many important problems are not mentioned at all, and where, as with usury, they are discussed in relation to an earlier age it is impossible for the ordinary reader to apply anything he has learned to present day conditions. There is, of course, a limit to what the author can do in such a small book as this, but it is therefore so much more the pity that a great deal of space has been wasted in dealing with purely political issues.

In Chapter I there is a serious error of fact. One is given the impression that St Thomas and other medieval theologians not only regarded it as contrary to strict justice that a charge should be made for a loan *per se* but that special considerations could never justify the charging of interest, and that the recognition of the external titles, *damnum emergens* and *lucrum cessans*, to interest was a relaxation introduced after the Reformation. This is simply not true, and the right to compensation for a loss incurred or profit foregone in making a loan was clearly recognised by St Thomas himself. The reader might be left wondering whether this alleged relaxation was justified, and whether the charging of interest at the present day is permissible. This danger would not arise if Mr Hollis had brought his treatment up to date, and included a reference to the work of Fr Divine S. J., who has challenged the very basis of the Aristotelian-Thomist condemnation of usury.

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