

less about more and more'—p. 14) in the sweeping generality and superficiality of many of his statements:

The contemporary 'specialist' . . . generally obtains what knowledge he has of disciplines other than his own through the medium of digests, television, magazines, and so on—a 'third-hand' culture. (p. 15.) Huxley's *Brave New World* made all its readers of my generation laugh a good deal, with a delight that was unmixed. (p. 31.)

The style throughout is tortuous and verbose—the translator may, of course, be at fault—almost resembling that of Carlyle. Moreover, the argument appears to be prejudged: in an introduction of only ten pages we learn that the author will not 'kow-tow to technology', and that:

There is a fourth possibility for the future besides the *parousia*, besides a dreadful war which would annihilate nine-tenths of mankind and reduce the rest to the life of cavemen, and besides a 'population explosion' with corresponding increase in all forms of madness. It is still possible that we may enter on an age of relative calm and reflection: not a golden age, nor simply an age of transition, but a real and normal continuation, a period of clarification and of drawing things together. (p. 16.)

The first chapter of the book is concerned with defining the author's use of the word 'technology'. I wasn't at all happy with the result, nor with his subsequent discussion of 'faith'. This extract may illustrate what I mean:

While Thiers condemned the railway in the name of science and proved mathematically that tunnels would suffocate those who passed through them, a holy Curé d'Arts did not even guess that there were such problems . . . Some agnostics, and even some Christians, come very close to ridiculing the Curé d'Arts as narrow-minded and reactionary. But we cannot agree with them. The holiness of the Curé d'Arts certainly has nothing to do with his contempt for railways, and this country priest was surely in any case one of the greatest of the saints . . . (p. 46.)

Occasionally shafts of insight gleam through the verbiage. M. Queffélec's analysis of the world today (Chap. 6) contains much that is true—although there is precious little fact for a book in a series entitled 'Faith and Fact'. But the overall impression is unconvincing.

Christianity can welcome technology when—and it is not always proved to do so—it frees men from misery for a blessed poverty; but that is the extent of its welcome: it has no call to thank the power that makes poor men rich. (p. 80.)

But why, M. Queffélec, why?

LEO PYLE

A HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY; Volume VII, Fichte to Nietzsche, by Frederick Copleston, S. J.; Burns Oates; 42s.

This volume of his *History of Philosophy* will probably be more widely read than any of the earlier volumes of Father Copleston's *magnum opus*, with the

possible exception of the two on Medieval Philosophy. The reason is the paradoxical one that the philosophers he is dealing with in these pages are those in which English-speaking philosophers of the present day have least interest. For in general the traditional English method of studying philosophies of the past leaves little room for works on this scale. If a philosopher of the seventeenth century, say Descartes, is thought to be worth the attention of the twentieth, it is to his own writings that students are directed. Occasionally a book is written about a seventeenth-century philosopher—probably a Pelican—which a student may read as a useful aid to the digestion of the original text. In English universities at least there will rarely be a need for anyone to show a knowledge of the period as a whole: what is known about Malebranche will be known as a result of random remarks thrown out by people who write about Descartes or Leibniz. But the likelihood of a student, or even one of his preceptors, picking up an original work by Lotze, Schelling or even Hegel is, in the present climate of opinion, very small. There is all the more chance that a philosopher with an historically inquisitive mind will be grateful for the opportunity offered by Father Copleston of acquiring, relatively painlessly, the satisfaction his curiosity desires.

To be honest, the present writer cannot allow that there is much profit in this volume beyond the satisfaction of this sort of curiosity. More than half of it is given over to the luminaries of German Idealism, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel. Those who have struggled with *The Critique of Pure Reason* and cursed Kant for burying his great insights under a mass of technical obscurities will regard his successors—'die Epigonen'—as a sort of nemesis brought upon German philosophy by the vices of its greatest figure. By contrast, the philosophies of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, both old interests of Father Copleston, are capable by their very outrageousness of stimulating the imagination, and thus obtaining pardon on easier terms for their failure to stimulate the intellect. Miss Anscombe indeed has pointed out Schopenhauer's early influence on Wittgenstein. This was, however, principally due to an interest in solipsism, and Father Copleston has disappointingly little to say about Schopenhauer's thought on this topic.

The recent 'Honest to God' controversy occasioned remarks about the views of Feuerbach, an early antagonist of theologies based on a 'God out there'. This talk of a German philosopher so obviously suffering from a Hegelian hangover came a little oddly in a book, like that of the Bishop of Woolwich, whose principal aim was to get Christianity to grips with contemporary thought: immersed as we are in the development of the philosophy of Gilbert Ryle, it was disconcerting to be transported to a world preparing for the nativity of Karl Marx. But for those who value Dr Robinson's book as the period-piece it is, Father Copleston's volume will provide the historical information necessary for its full appreciation.

It would be most helpful if in future editions of Father Copleston's *History* either the numbers of the sections to which they refer were prefixed to the

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phrases in the abstracts printed at the head of each chapter and in the list of Contents, or the phrases themselves were inserted in the text after the number at the beginning of each section, or both these changes were made.

C. J. F. WILLIAMS

THOMISTIC EPISTEMOLOGY, Vol. I, by Georges Van Riet, translated by Gabriel Franks, O.S.B.; B. Herder; 46s.

In 1946 Dr Van Riet published *L'Epistémologie Thomiste*, a massive tome of some 700 pages dealing with the modern attempt to justify the realism of thomistic philosophy by a coherent theory of knowledge. When this movement began about 1850, it was not a case of thomism awakening from dogmatic slumber. It was occasioned by a feeling of dissatisfaction with the type of philosophy being taught in the seminaries and lycea of the time: an unpalatable mixture of various post-Cartesian ideologies. The early stages of the return to thomism were fraught with danger and looked upon with suspicion. We are surprised to hear of a Jesuit provincial being exiled because of his profession of thomism; and of a certain group of seminary professors describing themselves as a thomistic 'masonic lodge'! Perhaps no less significant is the story of a certain professor who suffered for his thomism and whose brother later became Pope Leo XIII. But the movements prospered, and the encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879), the foundation of the *Institut Supérieur de Philosophie* at Louvain and the *Institut Catholique* at Paris guaranteed the continuity of thomistic revival. Much has now been achieved in various branches of thomistic philosophy, surprisingly little on the crucial question that so preoccupied the pioneers of neo-thomism: the problem of knowledge. No agreement has been reached as to the conditions, the value and limits of human cognition. Maybe what was needed before a breakthrough could be accomplished was a reassessment of the achievements and failures of the past hundred years. Van Riet's monumental work has done precisely that.

This English translation, based on the 3rd edition, covers the first three chapters. i.e. about half of the French original. It is excellently done and beautifully produced. But 46s. is a stiff price seeing that the complete French original cost less.

NICHOLAS FOLAN, O.F.

THE COMPLEX QUESTION OF MIXED MARRIAGES, by Ladislav Orsy, S.J.; Burns and Oates; 2s. 6d.

The title of this brochure is well taken, since the question, as ably discussed by the author, is in fact exceedingly complex. As he points out, the problem can and should be set in three ways, 'theologically, legally in its proper historical context,